

No Longer Alone

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Summary: Toothless had been born alone, and he expected to die the same way. Loneliness was his way of life. But what happens when he bonds with a Viking boy named Hiccup, despite the feud between their species? Basically the entire movie from Toothless's POV, and believe it or not, he's a pretty intelligent dragon. Rated T to be safe! First fic, I don't own anything HTTYD. NOW COMPLETE!

## 1. Introduction: Alone

**\*\*Author's Note: \*\***

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING. I DON'T OWN HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON, OR ANY OF THE DIALOGUE, OR TOOTHLESS, OR ANY OF THE CHARACTERS OR CONCEPTS. THIS IS A PURELY RECREATIONAL ENDEAVOR. \*\***

**\*\*Hey guys! This is my first fanfic, and I'm super nervous. I've recently been really obsessed with How to Train Your Dragon, and by extension, Toothless, so I thought I'd make a fanfiction.\*\***

**\*\*This is just a silly, philosophical introduction to start. The first few chapters will just be going over Toothless's life before everything happened. Then, it will probably follow the movie verbatim, just with Toothless's opinions instead. \*\***

**\*\*I know there's probably a ton of stories from Toothless's point of view out there, but please give mine a try! Review if you want to...but I won't push you!\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Alone. It's one of the few words that every conscious thing can understand, even without knowing the word itself. For example, a wolf separated from a pack, the last bird living in a razed forest, and even a baby stolen from its mother know its meaning. Perhaps they understand the word in a different form than regular humans do, but

they understand it all the same.<p>

Loneliness is more than a physical stateâ€"it's a feeling: intense, overwhelming, and disquieting. No living thing wants to depend on itself for everything, including protection. After all, nature is the harshest of predators. It shows no mercy for the defenseless and isolated. How can a creature hunt for food if the entire world is hunting them? How can it sleep soundly?

Simple. It can't.

There is reason behind joining a pack, or allowing a parent to raise its child. Certain warmth exists with companionshipâ€"warmth that makes you feel like more than just another hopeless wretch, struggling to survive. You mean something to someoneâ€"you're worth protecting. There is immense comfort in knowing that you're not that only one watching your back.

There is mental, physical, and emotional safety in numbers. That much is true.

Indeed, there are some animals that live a solitary lifeâ€"but it is often a short one, filled with ceaseless running, narrow escapes, and more than anything: fear.

But as was mentioned before, nature is cruel. It looks no kinder on newborns as it does murderers. Some offspring are left behind at birth, forced to fend for themselves from that moment on. They trust nothingâ€"no oneâ€"and listen only their basic instincts. It is certainly a sad way to live.

But nature is also based on adaptation. And all animals can changeâ€"given the time and circumstance. These orphaned creatures are no different.

## 2. The Heat of Birth

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's Note: Sorry for that silly philosophical stuff. I always try to find deep meanings in things...and I'm probably not very good at it.\*\***

**\*\*Here's where the story starts. You'll get to see how Toothless was born, and start to form some theories as to what happened to the Night Fury species.\*\***

**\*\*I'm not using the name Toothless yet, considering that Hiccup gave him that name. However, he does have a sense of self, just no name. So I just refer to him as capital "The Dragon." If there's a few accidental Toothless's thrown in, I'm sorry. Just let me know!\*\***

**\*\*Here we go!\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>The Dragon remembered being born. He did not know how he was born exactly, or why, but he remembered the heat of

birth.<p>

Consciousness had not come gradually to the infant dragon. It was suddenâ€”like an unexpected epiphany that was both confusing and unwelcome. All the discomforts of growing inside his egg had rapidly become apparent to him. Abruptly, the shelled space that had been his homeâ€”his worldâ€”for weeks became far too small, too smothering for his liking. A sudden urge to escape had then gripped him.

It had also been his first time using fire. It was not on purpose, but an instinctual reaction. As his panic regarding his surroundings had mounted, he felt the gases building at the base of his throat. Unexpectedly, they lit, and blue hot flame spewed from the baby dragon's mouth. While any other creature would have panicked at the sight of fire, The Dragon had been comforted by it. It felt so natural; and it was natural for something of his kind. Intrigued by this control over flame, The Dragon had continued to fill the shell with fire.

Eventually, the egg's shell had exploded from the pressure. Its shards had flown everywhere, and coils of flame sharply extended from its spot. When the inferno died down, all that had remained was the baby dragon.

The Dragon remembered looking around, seeking somethingâ€”what, he knew not exactly, but he had been certain that someone should have been waiting for him to be born.

But he had been aloneâ€”the only wretch in a terrifyingly dark cave.

He had also been born without a name, and would remain nameless for many years to come. Names are exclusively human attributes, and dragons normally had no need for them. But for the time being, he will addressed as what he was.

Also in the future, The Dragon realized that he had been instinctually looking for his parents. His experience with other dragons had taught him that much. While normal mothers and fathers were supposed to care for their young until their first flight, The Dragon had woken up alone, and remained alone since that day.

His first flight had been out of desperation. The cave had provided no food, no waterâ€”just darkness and fear. Somehow, The Dragon had been able to use the sounds of his own roars to locate the mouth of the cave. When he had arrived, he realized how futile his efforts had been. The cave was in the side of a mountain, hundreds of feet above the ground.

The baby dragon, with his new and unbalanced feet, could not possibly hope to climb down. So he had sat, flexing the strange black extensions from his back.

Like a baby amused by its own feet, The Dragon had begun flapping them with both irritation and curiosity. It wasn't long before he had accidentally lifted himself above the ground, hovering a rather insubstantial distance, before falling back to the cave floor.

The Dragon remembered realizing what he had to do. He had begun flapping his wings around the caveâ€”experimenting. Soon, he had

realized he could hover fairly well, and within a day or so, he had built the strength to fly short distances.

Now starving, The Dragon had extended his small, baby dragon wings and jumped from the mouth of the cave. The air had caught in his wings' skin somewhat painfully, like a strong pressure. It wasn't anywhere close to unbearable, but it was uncomfortable at the time.

Finally, The Dragon had been able glide down to the strange world below—a world of varied landscapes, varied animals, varied dragons, and most terrifying of all—varied humans.

And in such a big world, it was dangerous to be so very alone.

### 3. Flying Solo

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's Note: Okay, so the story continues! I have 6 chapters written, the ones already posted included, but I'm barely 12 minutes into the movie! I'll try to continue the best I can, despite my busy schedule.\*\***

**\*\*Here we have a more grown-up Toothless! \*\***

**\*\*He's lived on his own his whole life, and he's basically distrustful of everyone—dragons and Vikings included (the latter especially). \*\***

**\*\*Basically, this chapter explains Toothless's life prior to meeting Hiccup. It's how he came across Berk, and why exactly Toothless never stole food when the other dragons were so inclined to do so. \*\***

**\*\*Enjoy! \*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>The Dragon was no longer small, nor was he defenseless. True, he was smaller than a Monstrous Nightmare, and not as robust as a Gronkle, but larger than a human by a considerable amount. Despite his size, he had proven quite strong and perhaps more intelligent than the other dragon species.<p>

But he also possessed different unique skills—skills that the other dragons could not hope to match.

It had been many years since that fateful day in the cave, back when he had struggled to fly. Nowadays, he was the fastest dragon in existence, his speed easily unchallenged by the other species.

Remaining alone for so long had forced him to adapt, and he had quickly mastered his flight and fire-breathing skills at a young age (for a dragon, at least). He could fly faster than the eye could follow, and his aim with fireballs was beyond impeccable.

These advantages made The Dragon a sort of superior breed. He

suspected it had something to do with his species, but he wasn't sure. After all, he had never seen a dragon that looked remotely similar to him. Most dragons were brightly colored, lizard or snake-like creatures.

But The Dragon wasn't. His head and body were flatter, his eyes much bigger, and his scales much darker. For some reason, The Dragon looked more like a bat, or even the few cats he had seen during his travels, than he did other dragons.

Due to these differences and his self-imposed survival guidelines, The Dragon alienated himself from others of his kind. Sometimes he would interact with them if circumstance required it, but he generally tried to avoid contact with anything alive except his prey. After all, some dragons were dangerously aggressive toward their own kind, like a Whispering Death he had violently encountered a little while ago. Unfortunately, The Dragon's favorite habitats often held too many dragons to really avoid.

One such place was an island that the human inhabitants called "Berk".

Berk was a small island filled with livestock and surrounded by fish-abundant water. It was also located only a few miles from a dragon nest with a particularly terrifying, demanding, and hungry Queen. With all those factors, it was a wonder that the island hadn't been completely overrun with the flying reptiles.

Well, it would have been inconceivable if Vikings hadn't presided over the land.

All dragons knew that humans are irrationally violent creatures. Despite their lack of claws, scales, fire, and flight, they had still proven to be very dangerous. Humans had abilities that dragons envied, such as the ability to build things. People are blessed with the gift of opposable thumbs, and they used that gift to ruthlessly kill dragons with sharp weapons, even if those dragons were simply fighting for survival and meant the humans no harm.

And as other dragons had expressed to him, humans tasted disgusting anyway. All muscle or bone, as they described.

Some humans held immense cowardice or apathy, and they thus chose not to bother dragons very much. But the people of Berk did not possess such traits.

When dragons flew near, these humans did anything but run away. The Vikings brought out axes, swords, and other deadly weapons, aiming them at the dragons' hearts. Vikings were horribly stubborn, and would fight to their last breath over a single sheep or fish. They simply did not understand that the dragons were not personally attacking the human settlements. If they didn't bring food back to the Queen, she would certainly eat them. And when the Vikings had all that livestock (the Queen's preferred meal) grazing outside like that, it was no wonder why the dragons were apt to attack.

Not all dragons were like The Dragon, meaning that they did not enjoy solitary lives. They simply couldn't handle it. So they would often join nests like the one near Berk to find solace in each other's protection, or more likely, the protection of the enormous Queen that

presided over them. Some of these dragons had lived in the nest for generations, and had grown up living there. It was inconceivable for them to really do anything else but serve the Queen.

Dragons are like any animals—even humans. They want to feel safe at all costs. And with humans around, a nest was their best option.

The Dragon knew better, of course. He had survived on his own for his entire life.

At some point, instinct had brought him to the nest near Berk, though. It had called to him, like it did most dragons.

After a mere few weeks of living under the Queen's rule, he had simply abandoned it. The Dragon was far from submissive, and he was not accustomed to supporting anyone but himself. Plus, he hadn't felt any safer in the nest, especially with the Queen ready to devour him at any moment. One day, he had just flown away, resolved to hunt only for himself.

Sometimes, the nest would call to him, and The Dragon would find himself unintentionally flying toward it, occasionally even arriving there. He would immediately leave, knowing that the Queen would try to kill him for his mutiny and lack of sacrifice. Most of the time, The Dragon managed to resist these urges though.

While his fellow dragons would attack the Vikings' livestock out of necessity (thus costing hundreds of lives on both sides) The Dragon would hunt fish out at sea. His predation would only occur in the dead of night, so that the Vikings could not spot him—especially at his top speeds. He preferred to remain unseen by such dangerous, ignorant, and barbaric creatures. It was safer this way. The other dragons could not, though. The Queen always required more than a few fish.

Sometimes, when the dragon/human battles raged on too devastatingly, The Dragon felt obligated to intervene. He would fly by quickly, still far out of the reach of Viking weapons, and launch fireballs at the humans' buildings. He did not want to fight the Vikings, but at the same time, he wanted to defend his brethren. A few plasma-hot fireballs, carefully thrown into the Viking throng, would often be enough to distract the humans. Then, his fellow dragons could escape with their kills, surviving to see another day.

No one had ever protected The Dragon, but he didn't wish such a life on other dragons. He helped out whenever he could.

The Vikings were especially terrified of him. They would often scream when they heard his wings cutting through the air, or the sound of the fire igniting in his mouth. The Dragon suspected it was because they had never seen him, and humans always feared what they couldn't see (or understand, for that matter). The Vikings' fear always diverted their attention from the other dragons, and thus greatly helped their effort.

But most of the time, The Dragon just stayed out of the other dragons' wartime affairs. He spent his days flying and hunting liberally, maintaining a relatively content existence—at least from a survival standpoint. But he was terribly alone—an outcast. He was too unlike other dragons, mentally and physically, and thus had

trouble relating to him.

The Dragon longed for the company of another Night Fury. With another of his kind, he wouldn't feel so alone, so isolatedâ€”so different.

But he had yet to find one, so The Dragon continued his repetitive, monotonous way of life. It was always the same. He would migrate from Berk in the winter, but not to the nesting grounds (He was too young, and the last of his kind for all he knew), and then came back in the spring for the summer and autumn.

Every night, he would hunt; and every morning, he would fly out to sea, enjoying his speed and the warmth of the seemingly nearby sun before sleeping the rest of the day away. Nothing interesting really seemed to happen to him. He was just survivingâ€”fun was nonexistent.

Flying was one of the only pleasures in his lonely life. The world seemed so much bigger when he was flying, and that made him more hopeful to find companionship.

This was The Dragon's life. It was cyclic, boring, and lonely. But he couldn't fix that, especially when it was the only thing keeping him alive. This way of life was one of the things he had always known, just like how the Vikings on Berk had always feared and fought the dragons, and how the dragons had always served the Queen. These were just things that The Dragon accepted.

#### 4. Sunrise

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's note: Hello again! If you're still reading, thank you! I ramble a lot. \*\***

**\*\*This is short. Just some Toothless flying, and maybe a bit of foreshadowing. Sorry, I move really slow. I like to develop my characters before the plot really starts. \*\***

**\*\*Next chapter's more interesting though!\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>Sunrise or sunset?<p>

Every flying creature had its preference, The Dragon supposed, when it came to choosing a time to take wing. Sunset would probably better suit The Dragon's interests, since the haziness of dusk could provide better concealment. After allâ€”he was a Night Fury. His scales matched darkness itself, and wasn't sunset the harbinger of darkness? He always felt safer at night, so he should have taken more comfort in the setting sun.

But he didn't. When it came to flying, The Dragon always favored dawn.

There was just something about sunrise. Perhaps the increase in temperature, instead of decrease, warranted The Dragon's preference.

Reptiles like The Dragon were cold-blooded. It made sense that he liked warmth. Plus, he was a fire-breathing, externally fireproof dragon, so he was attracted to a fiery object like the sun. There were times when he even dreamed of flying into it, just to see what it would be like in such a beautiful, warm environment.

There were other reasons too, of course. The start of a day was always better than the end. It held more promise. More hope. And for a lonely dragon in a bored state of existence, that meant something.

Morning was also a very special time. It was when all the nocturnal creatures settled down to sleep, while all the diurnal animals struggled to wake up. Therefore, it was almost completely quiet (except for the sounds of the birds), and The Dragon was rarely ever bothered by anyone—other dragon or human.

He continued to fly along the far side of Berk, where none of the Vikings lived. The golden beams of approaching sunlight still emphasized his silhouette all too visibly. With his black form against such a brightly colored sky, it was better to fly in an unoccupied area. That way, he couldn't risk being seen by any early rising fisherman.

Unfortunately, the majority of the fish lived on the other end of the island, meaning The Dragon could not use this time to hunt.

It was acceptable to him, though. The Dragon didn't want to interrupt his flying for hunting anyway. This was a time to be free from everything, even his own biological need to eat, or his fears of humans and other dragons.

The Dragon felt the air whip in and out of his wings, enjoying the pressure that once made him uncomfortable. The sun was bright on his scales, warming his blood, as he rose higher and higher into the pinkish gold sky. At some point, he folded his wings, allowing himself to drop toward the sparkling blue ocean. A few seconds later, he expanded them again. They slowed his fall like a parachute, eventually allowing him to glide toward a sea stack. He avoided it at the last minute though, swinging his tail to maneuver out of range.

Such tricks could be dangerous for a slower, less skilled dragon, but The Dragon was the best flier in his known world. He only found these stunts thrilling, and were thus the closest things he could get to real excitement.

But no one was impressed by his tricks or his flying abilities. He didn't even know if other dragons were smart enough to be impressed. And certainly no humans had ever seen him.

Soon enough, The Dragon realized the sun was too high in the sky. He supposed that it was getting to be late morning, and he could hear the Vikings' livestock braying in the distance. It wouldn't be long before the sound woke them, and who knew whether the Vikings would begin traveling to the far side of the Island? It was best for The Dragon to settle down somewhere safe.

He found a sea stack far from the Island—one that Vikings wouldn't be able to climb. Feeling content at his chosen spot, he allowed the



gas to fill his throat before igniting it. Plasma-hot fire poured out of his mouth as he turned in a circular motion, laying down on the smoldering ground. The heat was comfortable to him.

He had been awake all nightâ€”and when night came again, he would have to be awake for that too. It was the only time he could safely venture to the other side of Berk.

So The Dragon let himself drift off to sleep in the warmth of the sun. Far in the distance, he could hear Berk's Vikings waking. Vikings were so loud, The Dragon thought. Always hollering, building, and breaking.

## 5. Bound

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's note: Now things get interesting! Here, we'll finally see Toothless encounter some Vikings, and as you probably know (if you've see the movie) it doesn't end all that well for him. \*\***

**\*\*First sighting of Stoick too! \*\***

**\*\*Please enjoy! Hiccup's first appearance is next chapter! \*\***

**\*\*And sorry if the whole "The Dragon" thing gets confusing! But he's a dragon, and human names don't apply to him...yet. \*\***

**\*\*I also want to warn you of some violence in this chapter. But if you can handle the fight in the movie, and understand that Toothless lost a piece of his tail, you should be fine. \*\***

**\*\*Enjoy!\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>The Dragon awoke to some very disturbing sounds, his ears pricking up in response. He could hear some sort of conflict from the far side of the island, denoted by the screams and screeches of both Vikings and dragons. The odor of smoke was in the air, which was not uncommon in an area so heavily populated with dragons. But this time, the smoke was very thickâ€”probably the result of many fires. Whatever battle was occurring, it had to be a big one.<p>

He had also slept longer than he had intended. The sun had long since set, and the sky was very dark. Under normal circumstances, The Dragon would have already been hunting by now.

Hunger pestered him, but he knew that he would be better off staying put on the sea stack, away from the senseless violence. Still, the nagging from his stomach was ceaseless. Dragons needed a lot of sustenance to survive, and he would have to go toward the fight to get it. The Vikings would be especially vigilant in the wake of a battle too.

The Dragon decided to wait for the fighting to die out. When it was over, he would begin hunting. The Vikings would be exhausted by then, anyway.

But even after an hour of patient waiting, The Dragon could hear the fight continuing. Eventually, he couldn't stand his hunger anymore. He took flight, soaring toward the far side of the island.

The air was so cold. The Dragon definitely preferred sunrise to the frigidness of night. Still, he flew on, passing over miles of trees and wilderness until he was flying leisurely above the Viking settlement.

The sight astonished The Dragon. Nearly every building was ablaze, and dozens of dragons were foolishly invading the Vikings' land. Monstrous Nightmares, Gronkles, Zipplebacks, and other species were in the midst of a fierce battle against a horde of heavily armed Vikings. It appeared that the Vikings were winning too, given the amount of dragons caught under nets.

The Dragon saw one Viking in particularâ€”an overly burly, reddish, hairy creatureâ€”strike a flaming Monstrous Nightmare with a hammer. He noted that that one as particularly dangerous as he glided through the air. It also seemed that human was the Vikings' queen, or something of the sort, given the way they regarded him.

Almost every Viking had exited their shelters now, contributing to the fight. A battle of this magnitude hadn't occurred since The Dragon's arrival, and the sheer number of Vikings terrified him. He could also not help but feel a surge of empathy for the captured dragons, all of which would surely be executed.

The Dragon wished he could continue flying toward the ocean so he could fish in peace, leaving all the useless belligerence behind. It was all one big, stupid misunderstanding: "self-defense" versus "self-defense", eventually resulting in an endless cycle of so-called "self-defense" that was really just flat-out war. The Dragon was tired of the feudâ€”of the Vikings with their pointy weapons and the Queen with her enormous, cumbersome appetite.

But The Dragon's moral obligations outweighed his weariness. Looking mournfully at the captured dragons, he decided that he would try to distract the Vikings for a short time.

He picked up speed, his wings making an odd ghostly sound as they cut through the air. The Vikings heard him, of course, and they screamed things in their strange language.

"Night Fury! Get down!" was what it sounded like to The Dragon, but he had other expressions for those phrases.

The gases built up in the back of his throat, and he lighted them. As he flew past, he launched the plasma-hot fireball at the tallest edifice in their settlement, igniting it with purplish blue flame. The Vikings ducked with fear, and the building began to collapse.

Nevertheless, it was not a sufficient distraction for the other dragons to escape. Allowing himself a few more attempts, The Dragon shot past the building and launched another fireball. It hit its mark, like he expected. It made no difference to the captured dragons, though. The Vikings' nets were far too intricate for them to break. Still, The Dragon had to continue trying, so he began circling back toward the battle.

He was about to take another shot, traveling from the opposite direction this time, when he heard something whooshing toward him. The Dragon figured it to be another of his brethren, and took no evasive maneuvers.

That was a mistake.

Whatever it was, it wrapped around The Dragon like a deadly serpent, pinning his wings to his back mid-flight. His other limbs were also bound, preventing any form of escape. With impact, two heavy, round rocks smacked into The Dragon's skin, bruising it considerably before it fastened the trap. He moaned with fear, outrage, and pain.

Without any ability to fly, The Dragon began plummeting toward the ground. He struggled, panicked thoughts filling his head.

This was a Viking weapon—that was the only explanation. Only \_their\_ inventions were able to trap dragons so cruelly. But—how? Viking weapons couldn't fly! The sky was a dragon's only place of safety! This—this couldn't happen to him. He was going to die!

With his death nearly imminent, The Dragon tried to place himself in a survivable position. But survival was so unlikely at this speed.

He plunged toward the forest at top speeds. At the last second, The Dragon managed to snag a tree branch with his tail, slowing his velocity. He screeched with pain, feeling a part of himself ripped away as he continued tumbling toward the ground. Luckily, he was traveling at a viable speed now, but that did not lessen the pain as tree branches and other pieces of the landscape smacked him. And the pain from his tail was especially unbearable—it was like a part of it had been savagely torn from him.

Finally, his tumbling came to a stop, and The Dragon lay immobile in a clearing, breathing heavily. Once he recovered a bit from the pain, he tried to struggle against the trap that had bound him, hoping that the fall had somehow weakened it. However, he was given with no such luck, and he remained captured.

The Dragon did not know how long he waited there—hours perhaps? But he was going to die—that much was certain. He only hoped that it wouldn't be slow, given how hungry he already was.

Fearing the future, The Dragon closed his eyes. He could smell Viking on the trap. He hated that smell—he hated the Vikings. Hated the world.

## 6. Hesitation

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's note: HERE COMES HICCUPPPPPP\*\***

**\*\*Yes, Toothless and Hiccup will have their first meeting, and you'll learn what exactly was going through Toothless's head at the time.**

\*\*

\*\*I won't distract you anymore! Go on-read! \*\*

\*\*(This is the last chapter I have written for now. I'll update soon!)\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"Oh, the gods hate me," The Dragon heard a voice say from a short distance away.<p>

He could smell the Viking approaching, and soon realized it was the same Viking that had caught him in the death trap. Now, the human had returned to finish the job.

In truth, the pain and the feeling of confinement made The Dragon want to die. But despite being defeated, some part of him remained defiant, and he refused to allow this particular Viking the satisfaction of killing him. So he stayed quiet, hoping the Viking would continue on its path and ignore him.

The Dragon suspected that the scary, burly Viking that was the culprit behind his capture. How else could that trap have been thrown into the air? Only a particular strong human could succeed in such a task.

With the thought of the ruler Viking, the Dragon's heart seized with fear. No, no, no—he certainly did not want to die at that one's hands. The burly Viking would make the killing especially cruel.

He heard a series of angry mumblings from the approaching human. As it moved closer, the Dragon realized that this particular voice couldn't belong to the bulky Viking. It sounded too—young. This relaxed him a little, but still not enough to still his neurotic heart. He knew death was coming—the Dragon was sure of it. Like before, he closed his eyes, fearing the worst.

He heard a gasp and a shuffle from very close by, probably from the Viking. Yes, he could smell it so clearly now. It was definitely the Viking that had shot him down. And it was close—so close that The Dragon should have set the human ablaze by now. But he couldn't bend that way—the trap was too strong.

He heard the Viking walking toward him now, probably only a few feet away, and closing fast. Scratch that. It was standing right next to him now, reeking of livestock, metal, and something so uniquely and disgustingly human.

"Oh wow, I did it," it huffed, the words confusing to The Dragon. From its tone of voice, the Dragon supposed that it was a male, and that it was also relieved about something. It continued excitedly. "This fixes everything! I have brought down this mighty beast!"

The Viking placed a foot on The Dragon's leg. Outraged, he pushed the human off of him with a flick of his leg, the action accompanied by an indignant moan. It was one thing for this Viking to finish the hunt, but it was another thing entirely for the Viking to gloat about it. The Dragon had no patience for such behavior.

He felt the Viking fling himself away, terrified at his sudden move. A few seconds of heavy breathing (from both creatures) ensued before the human plucked up the courage to approach him again. It wasn't like Vikings to be so cowardly.

The Dragon was suddenly overwhelmed with curiosity. What kind of Viking was thisâ€|exactly?

He opened his eyes, gazing up at it. It was very different from others he had seenâ€|a Fledgling, perhaps, but small even by a child's standards. A relatively tiny mop of hair covered the top of his head, and he wore a sort of green and brown fur all over his body. But what really registered with the Dragon was the terror in which the boy regarded him, even as he held one of those shiny, sharp Viking weapons over him.

But The Dragon still hated him, child or not. He poured as much possible hatred into an icy stare, assuring that the Viking would know how wronged he felt.

The boy visibly hesitated when The Dragon looked at him, his features becoming almost guilty. His face continued flickering between hesitation and resolution, the weapon shaking in his hands. Once again, the boy began speaking words that The Dragon couldn't understand.

"I'm going to kill you, dragon," it sounded like he was assuring himself. "Then I'm going to cut out your heart and bring it to my father." He pointed the knife down toward The Dragon's body.

"I am a Viking!" he began to chant repeatedly, his voice eventually sounding defensive, as if someone had questioned whatever he had said. With another deep breath, the Viking raised his weapon, preparing to plunge it down.

The resolved flickered again as he glanced down at The Dragon's eyes.

The Dragon no longer wanted to deal with this sort of anticipation. He was sure that the boy was going to kill him, no matter how terrified or guilty he seemed. He might as well get it over with.

Turning on his side, The Dragon closed his eyes and moaned in a defeated manner. He waited for the cold metal to break his skin, cut his heart, and do all sorts of other horrible things that Vikings were known for.

He heard an exhale of breath and a few more words.

"I did this."

The voice sounded guilty, which The Dragon supposed was fitting, especially since the Viking planned to kill him. So he continued waiting for the deathblow, sure that it would come soon.

Suddenly, a very different noise surprised him. It sounded likeâ€|sawing. The Dragon felt the boy pull at his ropes, and then realized that they were breaking and loosening. His eyes shot open with shock, ready to make his escapeâ€|or kill this very, very

foolish Viking. Whichever one best suited him.

As soon as he was completely free, The Dragon pounced on the boy, pinning him against a nearby rock with his foot. He stared intently at the human child's freckled face—a face now contorted by abject terror, his mouth releasing heavy, panicked breaths further indicated by the rapid rise and fall of his chest. Despite the fear that his body betrayed, the boy didn't really struggle. He appeared to have accepted his fate—accepted that The Dragon was going to kill him.

Before he brought that fate to fruition, The Dragon realized his own wrongdoing. When he had fired at the Vikings, he had attacked this child's home, or his family—something that The Dragon had longed for his entire life, and would do anything to protect if he possessed. Indeed, the boy had justification in his attack—in his desire to kill him. But instead of finishing the job, the boy had been merciful; he had allowed The Dragon to live. He had broken the chain of endless hostility and feuding.

Now the situation was reversed. The boy was trapped, at the mercy of The Dragon. Could he really prove more immoral than this Viking boy? Could he really kill something that tried so hard to avoid killing him?

He was just a boy. A boy protecting his home and his family. A boy who had decided to save a life at the risk of his own. A boy who was defenseless against dragons and probably his own kind.

But a part of the Dragon still hated the child, so he proceeded to snarl, and gave the Viking his scariest roar, to which the Viking cowered at.

Then, the Dragon flew away—or tried to anyway—sparing the child. Something was terribly wrong with his tail, and flight was nearly impossible. He would rise a few feet before plummeting back toward the ground, screeching confusedly every time it occurred.

Eventually, he settled on the ground of a ravine, hoping that the injury was only temporary, and that he would soon be healed enough to leave.

But the thought of the Viking boy still plagued him, causing unwelcome gratitude to burn at the pit of his stomach. He owed his life to that child. And even if he wouldn't survive from this day on, he had bought The Dragon a day all the same—and a day can mean everything.

After all, your hopes can come true within the confines of a day.

## 7. Trapped

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's note: Hey guys! First off-thanks so much for the follows, favorites, and reviews! They mean a lot to me. I quite literally have no idea if my writing's any good, so your opinions help!**

\*\*

\*\*Now...story continues yet again. In this chapter, we get another brief encounter between Toothless and Hiccup, and Toothless makes a startling realization about his tail.\*\*

\*\*Also, I'd really appreciate some more reviews. Criticism would be really welcome, especially since I'm always trying to get better. I know I said I wouldn't push you guys, but I really want to know whether improvement is necessary. \*\*

\*\*Well, enjoy this chapter. Sorry about the rapid chapter updates too, but chances are I won't have time to add to this during the week.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Soon enough, The Dragon realized that he was still effectively trapped. It wasn't a problem involving Vikings, or their tricky devices, but a trap he had accidentally imposed on himself.<p>

It was his tail; the injury was far worse than The Dragon had initially guessed.

In truth, the blame was his alone—“not really the Vikings”. If he had grabbed that tree branch with one of his legs, or even the lower part of the tail, he would have been fine. But at the time of his rapid descent, he had been too panicked to think clearly, and his injury was the consequence.

Even directly after the boy had released him from the trap, The Dragon failed to notice the extent of his tail's damage. He had assumed that it was just bent out-of-place, like any other broken bone, and waited patiently to heal (dragons heal rather quickly). It wasn't until the exhilaration and fear of death had passed that he realized that half of his tail was actually missing! The left tail fin had been ripped away so that there was hardly a remnant of the thin, smooth skin that had once existed there.

Fear gripped The Dragon's heart. His kind doesn't necessarily understand the physics of flight, but most birds, bats, and dragons knew that a damaged tail could ground an animal for life.

Hoping that such an impediment was not the case, The Dragon unfolded his wings and carefully attempted to take off from the bottom of the ravine.

His wings flapped with enormous force, displacing leaves and other small objects around him. The Dragon was momentarily relieved since he was rising above the ground, meaning that he could fly.

His worries dissipating, The Dragon resolved to leave Berk. He had sustained enough injuries already, and didn't want to deal with any more violent Vikings.

As he tried to maneuver himself out of the ravine at a diagonal angle, he suddenly felt himself drop out of the sky. He screeched as he fell back toward the earth, slamming into the ground. However, he was not hurt, so he shook off the pain of his fall. Certain that it was just a fluke, The Dragon took off again. A few seconds passed

before he plummeted back down again, as if the air was suddenly rejecting his presence.

No! He was going to fly again! He'd find some way to make it work.

The Dragon tried to take flight for hours, but for some reason, he just couldn't maneuver out of the ravine. After hollering and spewing fireballs with frustration, he continued feverishly flapping his wings, but the sky was still far out of reach. It was useless—he just couldn't get high enough to clear the ravine's walls.

In desperation, he even tried climbing the rock walls of the gorge, now just content with leaving the hole. His efforts were fruitless, though. Every time he tried to escape, he fell back down again, sometimes slamming painfully into the rocks surrounding him.

He gave a final effort with his wings, rising a considerable height in the process. Just as escape seemed possible, the wind caught him the wrong way, and he tumbled back down. Defeated, he lay heartbroken in the sand by a small pond.

His ability to fly had been revoked. And now—he was stranded in this gorge. A flightless dragon in a hostile Viking land.

He thought back to his gratitude toward the Viking boy. Perhaps it wasn't mercy that had driven his actions—but cruelty. Maybe he had spotted The Dragon's injured tail, and wanted him to feel the torture of being so close to freedom, only to realize that it was unattainable.

It simply wasn't fair. The Dragon had only one pleasure in life: flying. It was what he excelled at more than anything. But for some reason, that one joy was stolen from him, and now he was going to die the way he was born—flightless and alone.

He started to wish that the Viking boy had killed him. Given the guilt the child had felt, he probably would have made the job quick and painless for The Dragon.

Trying to fight the despair in his thoughts, he remembered that he still had a day—maybe more. A day meant something when it came to survival. It was no use dwelling in the past.

Smelling fish in the tiny, blue pond, The Dragon plunged his head into the icy water, hoping to snag unsuspecting prey. However, the prey was obviously suspecting, considering that he surfaced with an empty mouth.

This was more than maddening. How was The Dragon supposed to hunt without flight? It was his greatest advantage!

A clattering sound above him alerted The Dragon to an intruder. He turned his head in time to see a falling stick of some sort, and followed the path of its descent to its origin.

Sitting on the rocky wall of the gorge was the Viking boy, looking terrified at The Dragon's attention. He should have smelled the child's presence, but his residual smell from the nearby forest kept The Dragon ignorant.



They held each other's gaze for a while. The Dragon still somewhat disliked the Viking boy, so his stare echoed his emotions. Meanwhile, the child's face betrayed a mixture of curiosity and fear, but there was nothing hostile about it. He was holding something tooâ€”not a weapon by the look of it. It was one of those Viking inventions, though. What was it calledâ€”? A "book?"

He saw the Viking boy cock his head. It was strange to see him move that wayâ€”the action was just soâ€”animalistic? Dragonish?

Almost subconsciously, The Dragon returned the gesture, cocking his head in the same direction. He honestly did not know why he mimicked the motionâ€”perhaps it was a challenge? His way of saying "What are you looking at?"

They remained there for almost an hour, staring at each other intensely, maybe trying to determine the other's intentions.

What did the boy want from him? The Dragon wondered. If he wasn't planning to kill, then why did he return? Was it guilt?

As the sun set, the boy broke eye contact, beginning to climb back out of the gorge. The Dragon had never been so jealous of human handsâ€”their ability to climb, or build, or hold.

He wondered whether the boy would come back.

Immediately chastising himself for the thought, The Dragon reminded himself that the child was a Vikingâ€”and Vikings killed dragons. Plus, the boy had shot him out of the sky! The Dragon should want to flay the child alive, not see him again.

But yetâ€”there was something vaguely dragonish about the child. An intelligence and empathy that echoed his own. It was comforting to know that for once, something in this world did not intend him harm. After all, he had shown the dragon mercy.

But in reality, it was that moment. The moment when they had mimicked each otherâ€”and for a second, The Dragon did not feel so alone.

It was a silly feeling, though, and The Dragon tried to ignore it. Vikings and Dragons should never, ever interact.

## 8. A Gesture of Goodwill

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's note: Whoa. This chapter's wayyyy longer than I wanted it to be, but I just couldn't find a good place to break it up into two parts.\*\***

**\*\*Anyway, we're now starting more of the cute Hiccup/Toothless interactions, which is pretty much the whole reason why I wrote the story. \*\***

**\*\*I just really want a dragon, okay? Toothless is adorable, and I wish I were Hiccup. \*\***

\*\*But with my outlandish hopes aside, I hope you enjoy this chapter!  
And if you get the chance, tell me how I'm doing!\*\*

\*\*And thanks to all the lovely people who left me reviews, favorites,  
and follows! I'm glad you like the story! YOU GUYS ARE THE BEST!  
:D\*\*

\*\*\*\*ALSO, one of my reviewers requested that I do a similar story  
based on \_Gift of the Night Fury.\_ That definitely sounds like  
something I'd be interested in, and I'll get around to that when this  
one's done.\*\*\*\*

\*\*Well...continue on intrepid readers!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>The next time the boy came around, The Dragon was prepared. He  
had heard the clumsy treads of the boy's feet, and smelled his  
strange, livestockmetal/human scent before he was barely a  
quarter-mile into the forest.

Ever since the child had surprised him, The Dragon had remained  
cautiously attentive with ears, eyes, and nose out for any more  
intruders. He couldn't afford to let anyone or anything sneak up on  
him again, whether the boy meant him harm or not. If he couldn't  
remain vigilant, he would become an easy mark for a hostile dragon or  
Viking.

But if the agonizing pain in his stomach was any indication, he was a  
dead dragon no matter what. It had been almost two whole days since  
he had eaten anything, and his hunger was unbearable. In truth, The  
Dragon wasn't sure how long his species could last without food, but  
he certainly didn't want to find out. Still, he couldn't imagine the  
pain in his stomach worsening, so he suspected that he was already on  
the brink of dying from starvation.

As the Viking boy approachedâ€”apparently squeezing through some  
rocks that were far too small for any larger creatureâ€”The Dragon  
hid behind a rock formation.

Last time, the boy had stayed safely out of The Dragon's reach.  
However, his close proximity suggested that he actually intended to  
interact now. This made The Dragon skittish, and he was fearful that  
the Viking boy might have reverted to his people's violent  
tendencies.

Normally, it would have been truly ridiculous for a dragon as fierce  
as this one to fear this tiny boy. He suspected that the child was a  
runt, even among his own people. But without so much as a fish in  
days, The Dragon was unsure whether he could fight off even someone  
as scrawny and defenseless as the Viking child.

So he hid, waited, and watched.

He saw the boy squeeze between the rocks, struggling with even the  
most minor physical activity. Another Viking contraption accompanied  
himâ€”a round, wooden object of some sort. He recognized that the  
Vikings used those in combat, and became immediately distrustful.  
Before he could prepare to attack, the boy quickly wedged the flat  
object between two rocks. It appeared accidental, seeing as the boy

fought to pull it free. Unfortunately for him, it was too tightly stuck for him to remove. So he abandoned it, and The Dragon decided to withhold his attack.

It was not long before Toothless smelled a different aroma—something very familiar and appetizing. He quickly identified a fish's odor, and its origin was the boy's hand. The child held one as he cautiously staggered into the ravine, his fear as apparent as ever. His head swung from side to side, obviously keeping an eye out for The Dragon. He had yet to see him hiding behind the rocks.

The smell of the fish was so tantalizing that The Dragon subconsciously left his cover, foolishly advancing toward the boy. The action went against his better judgment, of course, but right now, his stomach was controlling his body instead of his brain.

It wasn't long before the boy spotted him prowling over the rocks. At the sight of the dark creature, the child gasped and froze in fear. The Viking stood still as The Dragon continued moving toward him, the latter sniffing the air to catch the smell of that precious fish—though he still regarded the boy with suspicion. It could have been a trap of course, and The Dragon wanted to be prepared for that.

But he was also determined to eat that fish at any cost.

The boy's eyes were still wide with fear, but instead of retreating, he extended the fish out to The Dragon.

He wondered why the boy had brought him food. Was it a trap, like he feared? Or was it something else? A gesture of goodwill, perhaps? The boy's motives confused him greatly, and he tried his best to seem as intimidating as possible. If he meant The Dragon ill, then maybe he could scare the child out of his determination—and maybe he would drop the fish as he bolted.

But even if the child was a harbinger of danger, he did not flinch from The Dragon's stare.

Any inner willpower that The Dragon possessed was simply melting away. After all, the fish was right there—almost begging him to devour it. His body continued to move toward the boy without his permission, opening his salivating, hungry mouth with anticipation.

Suddenly, The Dragon spotted a metallic glint, peeking out from underneath the fur dressings that the child wore—most surely a weapon. At the sight of the sharp object, The Dragon was overwhelmed with an instinct of self-preservation that momentarily masked the pain of hunger. He growled, stiffening his body in a defensive stance, ready to attack the boy if necessary.

The reason behind the sudden change of mood became apparent to the Viking child, and he revealed the weapon concealed under his livestock skins. His hand went toward it, and The Dragon flinched—ready to protect himself.

The boy immediately moved his hand away from the sharp object, flinching with even more terror than the dragon had betrayed. His hand went to the weapon again, and it crossed The Dragon's mind that

he should protect himself. But he didn't. Something about the boy's curt body language suggested that he didn't intend any harm toward The Dragon.

Instead, the boy grabbed the shiny item by its uppermost point, lifting it up and away from the Dragon. Then, he let the weapon slip out of his hands, and it fell to the ground.

Another gesture of goodwill, The Dragon supposed. But it was still within arm's reach, and that was anything but comforting.

Still on the defensive, he used his head to motion for the boy to kick the weapon away, and the human complied quickly, using his leg to actually toss it into the pond.

For a moment, The Dragon wondered why the child was risking his life this way. He was, quite literally, going defenseless into a dragon's den. If the situation were reversed, The Dragon certainly wouldn't have forsaken his weapon in the face of a deadly animal.

Actually, he had no need to reverse the situation. The Dragon was in the face of a potentially deadly animal-the human boy. And even The Dragon had his defenses. But the boy had nothing-just a fish, and that provided very little protection.

Why did the boy trust him so much? It made no sense.

A sort of warmth filled The Dragon's stomach, but it was not an indicator of a coming fireball. It was more gratitude, he supposed-and maybe not as unwelcome this time. He sat up, looking at the boy with an affection that The Dragon had never experienced before. Never before had someone been generous and trusting toward him.

The boy saw this as an invitation, and he held out the fish once more. In response, The Dragon continued approaching with an open mouth, his teeth already retracted. No need to scare the human more than he already had. In fact, retracting his teeth may have been the most trusting thing that The Dragon had ever done.

He was now close enough to touch the boy, and he waited with an open jaw, hoping that the child would drop that delicious fish into it.

But the boy was stalling, gazing with interest at The Dragon's gummy mouth. The human then made a guttural sound, and spoke a string of words from the Viking language.

"Toothless?" he began. "I could've sworn you had-"

Unfortunately, The Dragon was far too hungry to let him finish his foreign phrase. The fish was too mouth-watering, and as much as he wanted to avoid scaring the boy, satisfying his hunger was his first priority.

He let his teeth shoot back out, and he snatched the fish from the boy's grasp, hopefully avoiding his strange little human fingers. Chewing quickly, he allowed the fish to slide down his throat. As it did so, he closed his eyes, simply enjoying the feeling of eating again. The food instantly made him feel better, and he licked his

lips.

"-teethâ€|" the boy finished, his voice nearly as small as his stature. The Dragon's sudden attack on the fish had obviously startled him, seeing as his arms were pressed to his chest protectively.

The Dragon suddenly felt bad. The boy had brought him the fish, yet he had done nothing but frighten the boy. In truth, The Dragon was unsure of how to interact with other creatures, especially in a generous manner. It seemed to him that he should give the boy something in return.

He stalked toward the boy again, and this time, the child panicked. He made all sorts of nervous sounds, but The Dragon just continued approaching him. Soon, he had pressed the Viking against a rock, their faces mere inches apart.

Time to be generous, The Dragon decided. He allowed part of the fish to slide back up his throat, promptly dropped it into the boy's lap after a variety of gagging noises. The boy made a face-one that The Dragon did not understand very well. He hoped it was excitement.

Perhaps The Dragon's behavior was discomfoting to the boy. Maybe he should try to act more human.

So he sat up, sitting on his hind quarters with his torso erect, just like the Vikings were often seen doing. He then gazed down at the child, hoping that the new position eased some of the tension between the two. It was a selfish thought, but if the Viking stopped fearing The Dragon, it was possible that he would bring more food.

The boy didn't seem very inclined to eat the fish, which made The Dragon worried. So, he used eye movements to gesture to it, hoping the boy would understand that he was supposed to eat the fish remnants. Eventually, the child understood, and he took a tentative bite out of the food. However, he did not swallow it, which was concerning.

It crossed his mind that the boy did not even know how to eat. After all, he was awfully skinny.

So he pantomimed the action of swallowing, trying to teach the silly, naive Viking. The human obviously had some trouble learning, and it took some coaxing before he would even try. Finally, the child succeeded, and The Dragon was content. He didn't try to make him eat the whole thing-he simply didn't have enough patience.

What kind of creatures were Vikings, anyway? Why didn't they know how to eat, especially with all that livestock available?

Suddenly, the boy contorted his face into a strange expression. He was lifting his lips away from his jaws, exposing the teeth underneath. The Dragon hadn't really seen such a look before, but it did not seem threatening. Maybe it was some sort of human mannerism?

Intrigued, The Dragon narrowed his eyes at the boy, wondering whether his own mouth could make the same shape. With trouble, The Dragon

lifted his lips off of his jaws, exposing the gums underneath.

The boy took this as an invitation, and he extended his hand-perhaps to touch The Dragon. That, of course, was not what the latter wanted, so he proceeded to growl. Mimicking the human's expression was obviously a mistake. He had probably accepted some sort of Viking request to be petted by accident.

So The Dragon did his best to fly away from the boy, bringing their little interaction to an abrupt end. He was only in the air for a few seconds before he tumbled to the ground, disappointed-as always.

His ears pricked up with the sound of a bird's song, and he spotted its nest in a nearby tree, automatically becoming overwhelmed with envy. Why could those slow, stupid birds fly while he was grounded? It wasn't fair. They were probably too dumb to even properly enjoy the thrill of flight.

When he looked back down, the boy was sitting right beside him, quickly becoming a nuisance. It wasn't an option to scare the boy away, seeing as he was The Dragon's only food source. So he tolerated his presence with difficulty, trying to block the child from view with his damaged tail.

For some reason, he felt the boy trying to pet him again, so he flicked his tail out of the way while giving the boy a pointed look. Finally realizing that physical contact was unwelcome, the Viking child sauntered away.

## 9. Breaking Barriers

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's note: First of all, thank you to my new and old followers, reviewers, and favoriters (that's not a word, but it should be). Your attention means the world to me, and I hope the story doesn't let you guys down. \*\***

**\*\*I really like this chapter, despite some of the choppy sentences I used. There's a ton of character development on Toothless's end, not to mention a relationship development between him and Hiccup (but you probably knew that already). \*\***

**\*\*Stories about pets and their owners just make me really happy, okay? Especially when they're about Hiccup and Toothless. \*\***

**\*\*So here's the next chapter, also a little longer than expected. I hope that doesn't become a habit. If you want, drop me a review to tell me how I'm doing! I'm not exactly a dragon, so writing from Toothless's perspective can be pretty difficult. \*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Under normal circumstances, it would have been unwise to fall asleep with a human so close by. But the food had made The Dragon drowsy, and he just couldn't fight his exhaustion.<p>

Sometimes, The Dragon slept like a bat, hanging upside down from the wall of a cave-or in this case, a tree branch. It wasn't exactly the

most comfortable way to sleep, but if something tried to sneak up on him, he would be able to mobilize immediately. In The Dragon's experience, standing up took more effort than a simple dismount. With the latter, he could take off running at a moment's notice.

Not that he had anywhere to go in the gorge, but the position made him feel safe all the same.

As he nodded off, he saw the Viking boy toward the side, sitting patiently. The Dragon knew that the child's presence should have made him nervous, but it just...didn't. Maybe his company was even comforting.

As soon as The Dragon wrapped his dark (but useless) wings around himself, he drifted off to sleep

\* \* \*

><p>The nap lasted an insubstantial amount of time, but The Dragon simply <em>had<em> to wake up. His dreams were unbearable. They were not nightmares exactly, but dreams of flying. His subconscious remembered the cool wind, the warm sun, and the thrill of the open air. But even as he experienced these visions, a part of him knew that they were not true-that he would never fly again. And that realization made him feel completely hollow inside, like he was watching the memory of someone long since dead. Eventually, his yearning for flight became too much, and he shook himself awake.

It was sunset when he opened his eyes, with pink and purplish light indicating the lateness of the hour. The Dragon was still immensely tired, but he knew that falling asleep would only result in more painful dreams. He hoped to starve himself of sleep so that, eventually, he would be too exhausted to even dream.

As soon as he was conscious enough, The Dragon was greeted by a familiar, but unexpected smell. He looked around, realizing that the Viking boy was still in the ravine. The Dragon thought that the boy would have been gone by now, off to his little Viking settlement. But yet...he was still there. Didn't he have family or friends to return to?

The child was sitting on a rock doing...something. He was leaning downwards, looking intensely at the ground as he scratched a stick across it. The Dragon wondered what was so entertaining about the ground or the stick to warrant such focused attention.

He dismounted from the tree branch, intrigued. He was still jealous of human hands-how they could hold things like sticks and build objects and climb. And in reality, he had never seen how humans behaved up close. Maybe he would get to see one make something.

Approaching quietly, The Dragon came to sit beside the boy, hoping to avoid interrupting whatever...human thing he was doing. His shadow fell over the Viking, and the boy tensed with surprise. But he continued working all the same, and The Dragon watched his progressing creation steadily, his head following the constant movement of the stick.

The Dragon was very interested in...whatever it was. The closest

thing he could compare it to was a reflection of himself on the surface of a still pond. But it was only the barest outlines, and it was made by human hands-not by the light. Also, it lacked color, remaining the earthy brown of the dirt.

It was then that The Dragon realized that the boy had actually drawn the image with the stick.

Amazing! Who knew that sticks had such magical properties? As brutal as humans were, they were quite ingenious at times.

The child's rendition was so good that The Dragon could do nothing but admire the boy's skills, and internally seethe with jealousy over his own inability to create such neat things. But that was not the child's fault, so he purred with approval.

Suddenly, The Dragon was overwhelmed with the desire to draw pictures too. Maybe he didn't have clever little human hands, but he could make something!

Besides, The Dragon couldn't let the boy believe that he was superior to him, even in something as trivial as drawing. Vikings were such arrogant creatures-they always believed they were better than other animals. That mindset probably drove their belligerent nature, and The Dragon worried that if the boy lost his humility, he might become as dangerous as the rest of his people.

And he liked the boy the way he was-quiet, kind, and generous.

Now inspired, The Dragon waddled over to the edge of the ravine, toward a small group of trees. After selecting a sickly looking one, he snapped his powerful jaws around its trunk, pulling it out of the ground. Dirt flew everywhere, and the ground looked like a deformed mess, but The Dragon didn't care.

Awkwardly carrying the tall tree in his mouth, he stumbled back toward the boy. The bottom of the trunk was trailing along the ground, creating linear indents in the ground-just like the Viking's stick had. In truth, he didn't know what he intended to draw; he just knew that he wanted to make something. Perhaps he'd be the first dragon to accomplish human feats.

The Dragon growled joyfully as he spun around, using the tree as a writing utensil. He swirled, pivoted, and dotted, making his own dragon creation. It wasn't a portrait or a landscape, but it was something that The Dragon found beautiful, and he was proud of his work.

For the first time since he had lost the ability to fly, he was having fun.

With a glance behind him, The Dragon noticed that the boy was watching his work with utmost interest. Admiring his superior skills, The Dragon assumed. His picture was pretty amazing.

Finally, he finished, purring contently. The boy was standing now, examining his work with surprise. As he moved from the rock, he stepped on one of The Dragon's lines.

That was so rude! He hadn't stepped on the boy's drawing! What gave



him the right to ruin The Dragon's?

Angry, he began growling aggressively at the boy, stiffening his body and lowering his head. He meant no real harm toward the child, but he also wanted to preserve his masterpiece. And if scaring the boy was the only way to do that, then so be it.

As expected, the Viking jumped and lifted his foot off of the line.

Affectionate again, The Dragon abandoned his hostile behavior and stared at the boy, seeking praise for his own work. But instead of praise, the boy brought his foot back down on the line.

Was this kid stupid or something? What part of "leave his work alone" did he not understand?

The Dragon returned to his previous stance, a growl echoing in his throat.

Somehow, his anger became a cycle. The boy kept lifting and dropping his foot repeatedly, and The Dragon was forced to react with respective affection or anger to each action. The child was obviously confused and a terrible learner, and The Dragon wondered what it would it take to make him understand.

Eventually, the idea must have gotten through the human's thick skull, because his feet finally avoided the line. The Dragon watched as the boy wove through the grooves in the ground, his feet terribly unbalanced and his arms outstretched toward his sides. It was rather funny to look at, actually.

The Dragon skulked along the edge of his masterpiece, following the child's progress. After a few seconds, the boy finally escaped the jungle of lines, almost toppling backwards into the awaiting Dragon.

He breathed into the boy's brown hair, and blowing it to the side. The rush of warm air caused the Viking to acknowledge The Dragon's presence, and he turned to face him with shock. His expression was still pretty fearful despite the fact that he had spent hours with a wild dragon and had thus remained unharmed.

Then, almost as if he were mesmerized, the child outstretched his hand toward The Dragon's head. It was the same gesture as before-a gesture that The Dragon had quickly rejected, and intended to do again. He growled in response, staring at the hand as if it were something dangerous.

And to a dragon, human hands were especially dangerous.

As expected, he rescinded the hand, and The Dragon stopped growling, looking somewhat apologetic. It wasn't that he didn't like the boy...or even that he didn't trust him. Humans and dragons just weren't supposed to interact like they were right now-it went against everything he knew.

Surprisingly, he even enjoyed the boy's company, but he felt like physical contact was crossing a line-a line that he thought to be a permanent tradition. After all, the only time a human was supposed to

touch a dragon was in combat. Was it really their right to break down such sacred barriers?

The child's head was now angled downwards, and The Dragon initially believed him to be crying. But that was not the case. He was simply looking away from him, his eyes closed as well.

He outstretched his human hand again, the arm angled toward The Dragon. It was approaching him slowly-gently, even. And like the boy had been before, The Dragon found himself mesmerized by the slow movement of that hand, and he no longer acted out against its advance toward him. For some reason, The Dragon found himself meeting the hand with his own head, closing his eyes as he did so-all traditions forgotten.

The child's hand was warm, but not quite as smooth as it looked. There were callouses on the surface of his skin, but that didn't make the touch any less gentle.

Suddenly, The Dragon felt an intense surge of affection. It was not like anything he had experienced before, but it certainly felt good. For once in his life, he felt wanted-protected, even. It was like he belonged somewhere. No, not somewhere. Right here. With this strange little Viking boy who wanted nothing but to pet a dragon.

After a few seconds, both creatures opened their eyes, gazing at each other with confused expressions.

Then, The Dragon shook off his unusual emotions, bolting away from the boy.

He supposed that he was becoming more human, because he did not understand how he felt, and that scared him.

## 10. Toothless

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's note: \*\***

**\*\*I know, I know. Two chapters in one day is a bit overkill. But I really wanted to post this one.\*\***

**\*\*And unfortunately, writing longer chapters is becoming a bit of a habit, since this one is almost as long as the last. Sorry?\*\***

**\*\*But if the chapter label is any indication, \_someone\_ will be gets a name in this one. I won't spoil it for you, though. ;)\*\***

**\*\*I also took some artistic license with this one by extending the scene a bit. I know some of the stuff I wrote didn't technically happen in the movie, but I thought it filled in some plot and character development holes. \*\***

**\*\*Like always, I hope you enjoy! And please, tell me what I need to improve on! It would help me a lot! \*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>After the moment had passed, the Viking boy decided to return to his little village, possibly feeling dejected by The Dragon, whom he had inconsiderately ran away from him. A part of The Dragon realized that the child had been there far too long-hours, even. If they spent any more time together, his people would probably come looking, discovering The Dragon in the process.<p>

Initially, The Dragon was grateful for his alone time, believing that it would give him a chance to sort out his thoughts. But when a mere hour had passed, his emotional state only worsened. Loneliness crashed down on him like a thousand-pound weight, making his stomach feel hollow again-and that wasn't because he hadn't been fed.

The situation was funny, he supposed. The Dragon hadn't recognized the absence of loneliness until it had returned. Maybe that was the feeling's nature all along-and The Dragon, who had long since believed himself an expert on the subject, realized that he had a lot to learn.

He tried to pass the time, but it was difficult. Sleep wasn't really an option for him, given the dreams that plagued him. His main focus was wondering what the child would bring next-something fun, he hoped. Like drawing, which had been the only activity able to take his mind off flying.

As time passed, The Dragon began to worry that the boy was not coming back at all. His anger increased with each moment, suspecting the worst. He even started throwing random fireballs with agitation.

Fine! He didn't need that stupid Viking boy. So what if the kid had brought him a fish, or showed him how to draw? That didn't mean anything. The Viking probably just wanted to brag that he had pet a dragon with all limbs intact.

He was soon proven wrong, though, when he smelled the child strolling into the ravine, a basket of fish on his back. The Dragon tried not to seem excited, so he remained facing the walls of the gorge with a stoic expression plastered to his face.

"Hey Toothless," the boy said in those unfamiliar Viking words. He had heard the first one enough to know that it was some sort of greeting. But the second one-the child had now addressed The Dragon with it twice. It was a strange noise, sounding like a tongue click, "uh," hiss, "eh," and another hiss. It wasn't too different from some dragon noises he had heard, and he took a liking to it.

"I brought breakfast. I hope you're hungry," the child went on.

The Dragon continued his pretense and turned around, facing the human and the appetizing basket of fish unemotionally. The load must have been too much for the boy's skinny arms, especially since he dropped it with great relief, and then kicked it over with considerable difficulty. A large variety of fish scattered forth from the basket, and The Dragon was eager to dig in. However, he sensed something...wrong with the pile, but he had yet to identify what.

Soon enough, he realized the boy had brought something else in his arms, but The Dragon didn't pry about what it was. He knew it wasn't

a weapon. The boy wouldn't do that to him. Instead, The Dragon was more concerned with that problematic fish pile.

Suspicious, The Dragon advanced toward the pile as the Viking boy rambled on in his strange language. He didn't really understand what he was saying, but The Dragon deduced that it was something about the fish. When he gave the pile a sniff, he realized the problem-and it was a very big problem indeed.

Hiding among his beloved fish was the foulest of creatures-an eel. Dead, yes, but that did not make it any less loathsome. Not only were they vicious and slimy, but all dragons knew the horrible effects of eel consumption: sporadic fire-breathing, hallucinations, etc. It was a lesson that The Dragon remembered experiencing for himself at a young age-just another benefit of the orphaned dragon learning curve.

Backing away, he hissed and growled tremulously at the eel, terror and disgust fierce in his eyes. There was little on the planet that he hated more than those horrendous eels-and yet it sat there, contaminating his meal...mocking him. The Dragon wanted desperately for it to be removed, but he was far too scared to approach. In truth, he knew his fear was completely irrational. The eel was dead, after all. But his animal instincts demanded that he stay away from that abomination at all costs.

Seeing The Dragon's distress, the Viking boy immediately picked up the eel and flung it away. The human then outstretched his hands in calming gestures, saying words that expressed empathy of some sort. Once again, gratitude toward the child burned at the pit of The Dragon's stomach, along with another type of burning-his hunger.

Relieved, he tore into the fish pile. Now this was a meal fit for a dragon-a whole pile of fish, just for him. With each bite, The Dragon could feel the last pangs of his hunger fading away. He vaguely noticed the boy walking behind him, but The Dragon didn't give it much thought. Trust had replaced his suspicions by now, so he no longer became nervous when the boy got too close. Plus, the fish were the only real focus of his attention at the moment.

A few seconds later, he felt the Viking touching his tail. He wasn't afraid of the boy's touch anymore, but the feeling was a bit annoying, so he moved his tail out the way. It still felt like the child was grabbing for his tail, though, and The Dragon decided to let him. It was the least he could do after the meal the child had brought, and it wasn't like the tail had a purpose anymore, anyway.

The Dragon finished off the rest of the fish. However, a part of him still wanted more, so he stuck his nose into the basket, hoping to find any food that was hiding from him. Meanwhile, he could feel the boy wrapping something around his tail, but The Dragon didn't worry. Like he pointed out-the tail couldn't get much worse.

All of a sudden, he felt something on his tail tighten, and it was like the world had righted itself for the first time in days. He hadn't realized it before, but until this moment, his body had been unbalanced, awkward, and unnatural. But now...now the balance had returned. He let the basket drop and shook his tail, trying to figure

out the reason behind the change.

The boy tightened the thing further, and The Dragon's eyes widened. It was then that he realized that his tail had miraculously healed-the left tailfin returned.

He didn't care how it happened, or why. Maybe the injury was not as severe as perceived, and the boy had corrected the issue with his human hands. Whatever the case, the world was not as cruel as it initially seemed. There was some luck to be found.

Finally, he could return to his greatest joy in life: flying!

With his heart beating faster than ever before, The Dragon unfolded his dark wings, ready to depart into the open air. And he did so, unaware that the boy was still clinging onto his tail. But The Dragon simply couldn't notice-not when he was so distracted by his renewed ability! Even the boy's yells did not reach him.

But his rejoicing was cut short as he tried to turn, but failed miserably. His body began plummeting downward, his tail useless-just like it had been before. However, at the last second, he was able to pull up again. Maybe it was a fluke?

The Dragon shot up toward the sky like a bullet, gliding like the master-flier he once was. Then, he allowed himself to dive down, skimming the water of the tiny pond in the ravine. It was then that he felt the pressure of the boy's presence on his tail.

The Dragon looked at the Viking with incredulity-humans were not supposed to fly. It just wasn't natural. So he flung the child off into the water, hoping that the boy avoided injury.

But as soon as he was free of the Viking's grasp, he began to fall again. Before he hit the ground, The Dragon got a good look at his newly healed tail.

The fin wasn't healed, after all. Instead, there was some sort of Viking-made contraption in its place, flapping limply in the air. It was a poor substitute.

The Dragon hit the pond with astounding force, water splashing in all directions. He moaned, flapping his wings with irritation.

So...his impediment remained-lessened slightly, perhaps. Nevertheless, it was good to fly again, even for a short time.

As The Dragon pulled himself out of the icy water, he saw the Viking boy stumbling onto the sand. He had a pensive expression on his face, as if considering a way to improve the tail.

The Dragon still couldn't believe that The Viking had made the tail prosthetic, whether it had worked or not. Okay, the boy's drawings were still inferior, but The Dragon couldn't deny the child's ingenuity.

Overwhelmed with even more gratitude, The Dragon bounded over to the boy. The latter looked a bit panicked at first, unaccustomed to being approached in such a way, but he did not run. The most he did was wince at the splashing water.

Unsure of how he should express his feelings, The Dragon stood helpless for a while, wondering what to do. Then, he decided to do a natural thing-something that he had seen other dragons do to one another.

He nuzzled the boy with his nose. The child's confused stare implied that he had not expected such an affectionate gesture, but he showed no sign of it being unwelcome.

A few seconds later, though, he replied with his strange Viking words. "Thanks...Toothless."

The first word sounded like it also expressed gratitude...but the second-the second word was now very familiar. Maybe The Dragon didn't know what it meant, exactly, but he had now been called that for the third time. He was intelligent enough to realize that it was a description of some sort. In truth, he didn't understand the concept of a name yet, but his sense of self could comprehend that he was something, or even multiple things: a Dragon, a Night Fury, a flying beast. He could mentally categorize himself as all of those things.

But to this boy-this strange, Viking boy with even stranger words-he was "Toothless." And by knowing that he was that word, it became a part of him. That's what a name is, after all. A word with a meaning; A word that's a part of you. In time, "Toothless" will understand that.

With yet another bonding moment passed, the boy began to make his way out of the ravine. Before he left, though, Toothless could have sworn that he saw the child fish the eel out of the pond, slipping it under his furs.

## 11. Cooperation

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*Author's note: \*\***

**\*\*Man, it is sooo good to finally write Toothless. The whole "The Dragon" thing was starting to get on my nerves. It was so confusing too, especially when I was trying to compare "The Dragon" to other dragons. I mean, I'll still use the words "the dragon," but without capitals and not as a name. \*\***

**\*\*Hiccup, on the other hand, is another story (Gah, I don't mean I'm writing another story about Hiccup yet. I mean that his case is different, okay?). Recognition of his name will come later, so we'll stick with "boy," "human," "viking," and "child" for now. \*\***

**\*\*Also, I extended the scenes a bit more, once again trying to fill some holes. I hope that doesn't bother you guys too much.\*\***

**\*\*Well, as always, it is my sincere hope that you enjoy the following chapter! (Also, is it just me, or does the story seem much cuter when Toothless's name is actually used?）\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>The next time the boy returned, Toothless was in a particularly playful mood. His body was energized by the fish he had eaten, and his last flight had renewed his hopes again. Moreover, he had slept for the first time in days-the dreams of flight were no longer bothersome to him. His body needed some activity-and since flying was out of the question, he decided that running was his next best option, and he wanted the boy to join him.<p>

Toothless had never played with other dragons before, let alone a human. He didn't know how to do either. But he suspected that it involved things like racing and pouncing. That's what he had seen other dragons do, anyway. Maybe he could teach the boy to do the same.

As the child entered the ravine, Toothless ran toward him, looking eager.

It was strange how this boy had gone from a threat to his best friend in a matter of days. He felt good about it too. After all, this person wanted to spend time with him-to do things with him to escape the boredom. Plus, he didn't really want anything from Toothless in return-no ulterior motive. It was nice to feel genuinely wanted, even for a dragon.

Especially if that dragon had been alone since birth.

Toothless leapt around the boy, inviting him to join the fun. Of course, the boy did not. The Viking wasn't really one for running and jumping, as Toothless had recently learned.

But the boy was carrying something...another Viking contraption, perhaps? It was flat and smooth-probably made of some sort of livestock skin. It didn't look anything like his tailfin, so Toothless couldn't imagine what the device was for. To him, it didn't appear to help his flying, and therefore, it didn't interest him.

But the boy obviously wanted him to use it, considering that he kept holding it out to him.

No, no, no. That was not how things worked. If the boy wasn't going to cooperate with Toothless, then Toothless was not going to cooperate with the boy.

As the Viking moved toward him, carrying the new invention, Toothless lowered himself to the ground, then romped off sportively. He knew that the boy would have to follow him, which is exactly what Toothless wanted.

The chase lasted for a full half-hour. It only ended when the Viking put his hands on his knees, overcome with exhaustion. Worried, Toothless walked over to him, nuzzling his friend to see if he was alright. Of course, the boy was fine, and he managed to wrestle Toothless into that new device he had brought.

The Viking creation was certainly peculiar. It rested flatly on his back and fastened along his stomach. For a few moments, Toothless sat confused, wondering what its purpose might be. That question was quickly answered, though, when the boy started struggling to climb

onto the dragon's back.

At first, Toothless reacted horribly to that realization, trying to buck the child off. Humans couldn't fly, and therefore, shouldn't fly. It went against everything natural and traditional.

But then again...didn't their friendship?

Still, Toothless wasn't accustomed to the feeling, so when he managed to shake the Viking off, relief filled his heart. That should teach him! Humans had hands and dragons had wings. This was the way the world worked.

As a result of the dragon's efforts, the boy toppled to the ground, the wind having been effectively knocked out of his lungs. Knowing that he had injured his friend, guilt soon replaced Toothless's relief. He never wanted to hurt the boy-not at all. It was just that the child had a very confused sense of boundaries.

Concerned, Toothless stood over his friend's fallen form, staring down expectantly. Surprisingly, irritated eyes met his own. He had never seen that sort of emotion coming out of his friend, and it shocked him.

"Toothless!" the boy began indignantly, and the dragon unhappily realized that the child's negative emotions were directed toward him. That had never happened before."Could you please just help me out here?"

Of course, Toothless didn't understand any of the latter words, but the Viking's curt phrases seemed to express some sort of aggravation. In truth, he wasn't accustomed nor inclined to catering to other things' needs, but he supposed that if he wanted to keep his friend's company, he would have to make some sacrifices. At the end of the day, the boy had helped him a lot, and he deserved Toothless's help instead of his antagonism.

So the dragon stood still and patient as the boy climbed onto his back. The feeling of the child's weight, no matter how slight, was still very strange to Toothless. Both fidgeted a bit, trying to acclimate to their new arrangement. In fact, the dragon was still confused about why the boy wanted to ride him in the first place. However, despite his initial rejection, the feeling of the boy on his back soon felt...natural. But that couldn't be right. It wasn't supposed to feel natural because it was unnatural. Boys weren't meant to ride dragons, and Toothless was foolish to let his friend do so.

Soon enough, he felt something pull at his artificial tail-fin, stiffening it. The change made him want to fly, but he was very reluctant to move with a Viking on his back. But the boy urged him to take off with his foreign Viking words, and eventually, Toothless couldn't help himself. He flapped his wings, rising from the ravine's floor, and enjoying flight once again.

He didn't dare try any of his normal stunts given the human riding on his back. He wondered what his friend felt. Terror? Envy? Both? That's what Toothless would have felt if the situation was reversed.



But instead of screaming like the dragon had expected, the boy was focused and quiet. It seemed that the Viking was using a string to move Toothless's prosthetic tailfin. It suddenly made sense why the boy wanted to ride him-the fin had to be moved manually, and the human was the only one able to do so.

Or give it his best shot, as the dragon soon found out.

It wasn't long before his friend pulled the string the wrong way, and Toothless was flung out of the sky, back onto the ground. His rider, meanwhile, was thrown off to the side.

The dragon hit the ground hard, and the fall stung pretty badly. However, Toothless had become rather experienced in the art of falling lately, and he was mostly concerned about his companion. He rushed over to the pond, which is where his friend had presumably fallen.

The boy surfaced, coughing up water, and relief once again filled the dragon's heart. To him, this experience was only further proof of why humans \_shouldn't\_ fly, but the child looked more eager than ever. His face seemed excited as he staggered out of the pond, making his way toward the dragon.

"You okay, bud?" he said, his tone indicating worry. He petted Toothless briefly before examining the contraption on his back with a thoughtful expression. Unfortunately for the dragon, the Viking's interest probably signified an intent to fly again.

Exhaling heavily, Toothless began to wonder if the boy had hit his head too hard. Why the human hadn't learned from his two previous falls, the dragon didn't know or understand.

Vikings were just stubborn, he supposed.

## 12. Trial and Error

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N. \*\***

**\*\*Hello everyone! You may or may not be happy to know that this is a relatively shorter chapter. You'll get some more cute scenes that you'll probably recognize from the movie, though they're extended a bit. I guess that's becoming a habit too. \*\***

**\*\*But we're getting much farther into the movie, so that's good.\*\***

**\*\*I can't tell you how much I want to write a httyd 2 fanfic after this, but I'll probably have to wait until it comes out on DVD. Otherwise, I'd need to memorize every line and action from the movie, and that's pretty much impossible for me. \*\***

**\*\*Well...enjoy this chapter, anyway! Review if you can or want.\*\***

**\*\*ALSO, it has come to my attention that I sometimes forget to describe things in depth. Most of the time, I write TV show or movie**

screenplays, so my writing is pretty action based. I'm not good with imagery and colors and all that stuff. But I'll try to improve. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>As Toothless would soon find out, Vikings were, by far, the most stubborn creatures in the world.<p>

Over the course of the last few days, Toothless had fallen more times than he had in the rest of his life. Every afternoon, the boy would come with some new Viking device, and he would add it to the strange thing on Toothless's back (he was soon able to identify it using one of the boy's Viking words: "saddle"). Then, he would mount the dragon and urge him to take flight, and Toothless, being the fool that he was, would oblige.

It wasn't that Toothless didn't enjoy flying anymore. In fact, it was still his favorite activity. However, whenever the boy was on his back, it seemed that he was more prone to falling. With every tumble, the human ran a greater chance of being injured-it wasn't like he had wings to save himself. And even if he did, they probably would have been awfully weak-just like the rest of the Viking boy's muscles (Maybe he was so clumsy that he even enjoyed falling?).

Plus, what was the fun in flying when you could barely stay in the air?

But the dragon had to admit-some falls were more fun than others.

One of such falls had occurred quite recently. On that day, Toothless had been excited because the boy had arrived earlier than usual, meaning that they would have more time together. As usual, he gave chase for a while, and the boy followed reluctantly. Their race hadn't lasted very long, though, because the Viking knew that Toothless would slow down for him, and he had thus put little effort into it.

Finally, Toothless became bored, so he settled down to let his friend climb onto his back. He was no longer uncomfortable with the child sitting there, straddling the saddle. The pressure of his small weight was now familiar, like he had grown accustomed to a new scale. It seemed that the boy was a part of him now, just like the tail-fin prosthetic, or even his name-Toothless.

As was custom, the Viking boy had urged him to take off, and Toothless complied. Their flying was quite tentative for a while, cautiousness highly practiced by both dragon and rider. The dragon kept his wings stiff and his legs extended to catch them if they dropped. He also refused to allow himself to get distracted by the sensation of flight. As a result of their acute focus, they managed to fly out of the ravine, rising high over the island that had long been Toothless's prison. Dark green pine trees rapidly passed under him, like human hands reaching up from the ground. But Toothless was far out of their reach, his wings extended widely and his dark, scaly skin vaguely reflecting the warm sunlight.

For a moment, all was right with the dragon's world. He was flying again, free of the gorge like he had been before his encounter with the Vikings. But things were even better now. He had found a friend-a

friend that could ride with him, who would play with him (albeit reluctantly), and most importantly, wouldn't hurt him. His usually-constant loneliness had disappeared in favor of a sense of belonging-a sense of being wanted.

But then things had started to go wrong. The boy kept pushing Toothless farther along, despite the troubles he was having with controlling the tail-fin. Eventually, the string was accidentally pulled the wrong way, and both dragon and rider had toppled dangerously to the side, thus falling into the tall, grassy field below.

Once again, the boy had been separated from Toothless. The latter could still smell him, though, and blood was not redolent, so the dragon could only assume that the child was okay. Besides, Toothless had something more important on his mind: the grassy field.

It was so soft, and it smelled better than anything the dragon had experienced before. Within a few moments of sitting there, Toothless had unexpectedly found himself rolling in that long, bright green grass, simply enjoying the sensation. It was such an animalistic thing to do, and Toothless liked to think himself smarter than other dragons-but he could not stop himself. Something about the grass had appealed to his most basic instincts-relaxing him and filling his head with pleasant thoughts. His tongue even lolled out, and his neon eyes closed in delight.

He continued to aimlessly roll around for a while. It wasn't long before the boy came back, standing over him with an intrigued expression, his dark green eyes flickering between the plants and the dragon playing in them. He let Toothless play for a while, standing quietly, before pocketing some of the grass in his thick, brown furs-just like he had done with the eel.

Eventually, the boy was able to express his desire to leave to Toothless, unsuccessfully attempting to drag the dragon from his new favorite place. Unfortunately for him, Toothless simply would not budge. He was too comfortable in his current location.

It took a lot of coaxing, but finally, Toothless allowed the Viking to mount him again. It wasn't so much that the boy had been convincing, but more that the dragon had gotten bored-like always. With their last fall in mind, Toothless allowed the child to mount him, flying off very, very carefully.

When the boy had decided to leave, the dragon could not help but feel sad. He was lonely again-without flight, and without fun.

It was almost silly how dependent he had become on this...human. Before, he had been perfectly content with isolation. He had even thought it was part of his nature. Still, that much was somewhat true-Toothless didn't get along with other dragons or Vikings. But this boy...this boy was special. Everything they did together-whether it was drawing, racing, flying, or even falling-for some reason, felt right. And maybe that wasn't normal, but Toothless wasn't exactly a normal dragon, and he suspected that his friend wasn't a normal Viking either. They were both unique outcasts, and perhaps that was why they got along so well.

### 13. Attention

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*Another chapter down! Unfortunately, it's pretty much a filler, but I think it's super cute. \*\***

**\*\*I guess I'm dragging this out, but I'm enjoying writing the story so much that I don't want it to end. \*\***

**\*\*And wow...I was not expecting all this recognition for the story. It's my first fic, after all, and you guys have made it the best experience possible!\*\***

**\*\*Well, enjoy this somewhat uneventful filler chapter. But it's cute. So there's always that minor compensation. \*\***

**\* \* \***

><p> Luckily, the boy promptly returned the next day, this time carrying even more Viking tools than usual. Experience allowed Toothless to realize what this meant, and irritation flooded his thoughts. He knew that he would be bored for hours as the child fiddled with his contraptions, but he tolerated it. After all, the boy was ultimately working toward an important goal: flying without falling.<p>

So the dragon and the human sat side-by-side in silence, both lost in thought. It wasn't exactly fun for Toothless, but it was better than being alone. He spent the time listening to the boy work, mumbling frustrated or excited words as he did so. If the words were any indication, it became apparent that his friend's emotions often depended on the success of his inventions.

The Viking language was still confusing to Toothless, but befriending the boy had taught him a bit of vocabulary. He knew what "fish," were, or what it meant to "fly," and many other terms that the boy had spoken to him. In fact, he could respond to several of the Viking's commands as well-like "sit still" or "let's go."

Now, he even understood what it meant to have a name. Toothless was no longer a descriptive word to him, but a designation. He could have seen other dragons, or even other things lacking teeth, but they wouldn't be the same Toothless that he was. Instead, he was \_the boy's\_ Toothless. That word was his whole identity, and it distinguished him from the lonely dragon he had once been dragon that had never been seen, or cared about. Once you had a name, it was like you were claimed by all the aspects that made up your life-your home, your family, your friends, etc.

And the boy had claimed Toothless, so the boy became all of those things to him.

With this understanding, Toothless began to wonder whether his friend had a name too. He had given Toothless his name, so it only made sense that the boy had one also. But given the dragon's inability to ask questions, the child's name remained a mystery.

Sometimes, Toothless would try to give the Viking a name on his own. It was impossible, though. Humans were so good at making, speaking, and understanding words. Toothless could do the latter pretty well, but his dragon anatomy prevented him from doing the second one. Plus, his mind worked differently than those of the human species. He did not categorize the world around him with words, but with images, ideas, smells, and sounds. For example, he had no word for the dragon species of "Deadly Nadder." Instead, he mentally labeled it with memories of spikes, brightly colored scales, and over-sized jaws.

Moreover, dragons didn't really have a language. Instead, they used a variety of sounds that expressed emotions.

He considered using a particular dragon roar to label the boy, but he quickly discarded that idea. No two roars were ever the same, even if they originated from the same dragon. It was a mixture of emotion and sensory perception that really determined the meaning behind them. An angry roar could mean "go away" one day, and "hungry" the next.

For some reason, Toothless couldn't stop identifying his friend with images. He remembered the child by the way he seemed-his mop of brownish hair, small frame, and metallic smell. There were other things too-the way he used his hands when he communicated, or the furs he wore over his skin-that contributed to his unique perception of his Viking boy. He didn't know enough human words to assign him a name based on those complex attributes.

Tired of thinking, the dragon let his boredom get to him, and he gave a mournful moan. The boy didn't really notice-he was too swallowed up in his work, his fingers fumbling with animal-skin inventions. So the dragon repeated the sound, this time giving his friend a nudge with his leg.

"Almost done, Toothless!" the boy said distantly, staring intently at a silvery, metal addition to the saddle.

But Toothless was \_sooo\_, sooo bored. Couldn't the boy take a break, just for few minutes?

He began nudging his companion incessantly, but he was continuously ignored, and the boy continued working unfazed. At this, Toothless growled, seething internally. Stupid boy and his stupid inventions. They had so much time ahead of them to fix the tail prosthetic. Why did he have to do it now?

Toothless's anger reached its peak, causing him to act impulsively. Tired of his friend's lack of cooperation, he finally pushed the Viking boy over-in the most affectionate way possible, of course. The action was ultimately harmless, seeing as only the child's pride had sustained an injury. He turned to Toothless with a surprised expression that quickly melted into exasperation.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot that you need constant attention," the boy said in a smug voice, his eyebrows lowering pointedly.

The dragon roared indignantly, using his senses to determine that the child had accused him of something offensive (though probably not \_that\_ \_offensive. The boy simply wasn't mean enough).

Just as the boy sat up again, Toothless gave him a slight push on the back, and his friend fell back down. Clumsy as ever, the dragon noted.

"Fine. You want attention? Here!"

With an almost excessive amount of melodrama, the Viking threw himself off the grassy ground, lunging at Toothless. However, instead of commencing a real attack, the boy started petting his scaly, jet-black skin, his hands running playfully over the patterned surface. Toothless recognized that the action was a bit counterproductive to the child's hopes to be left alone, but the dragon wasn't about to complain. He was too busy enjoying the sensation of being rubbed and stroked, like most animals often were.

After a while, the boy scratched a certain spot below his neck, and Toothless felt his whole body go limp with pleasure. He laid on ground the almost paralyzed, but completely content.

It was true. Toothless enjoyed attention a bit too much.

#### 14. Trick of the Light

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*So, here we have yet another cutesy scene that got extended way longer than it should have been. I promise that we'll get to flying and Astrid and other fun stuff soon. I just like fluff and developing relationships between characters.\*\***

**\*\*Despite it being a filler, I hope you enjoy it anyway.\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Toothless didn't know what the strange creature was, or how it kept magically disappearing, but he was determined to catch it-no matter what.<p>

A few moments ago, Toothless had been sitting peacefully, minding his own business, while the boy played with his Viking tools. Prior to that, the day had been mostly uneventful for the two friends. After a botched flight attempt, both rider and dragon had felt too bruised to try again, so they lounged about in the ravine. Boredom had still played at the edge of Toothless's thoughts, though, and he considered bothering the boy until he agreed to play. But before he got the chance, the \_thing \_had arrived.

He saw the pea-sized object out of the corner of his eye, and at first glance, it appeared to be some sort of insect. But that notion was quickly proven wrong when it moved along the verdant ground at lightning speeds-speeds that Toothless had only seen himself traveling at. He didn't like the fact that the intruder moved faster than he did, even if it was much, much smaller than he was in both physical size and intellectual ability.

Though the creature had a visible luminescence, it seemed almost

translucent, allowing the dragon to see parts of the carpeted landscape through its body. These qualities appeared familiar to Toothless, but he could not firmly place it in his memory. It somewhat reminded him of fireflies, whose yellow effulgence he had experienced on distant, warmer islands. But fireflies, as their name suggested, could fly, while this animal never seemed to leave the earth's surface.

Despite the irritation that the speck had brought him, Toothless was not inclined to fight it. He was above fighting such small, harmless things. So he remained sitting, his cat-like face resting on his legs

But then the creature's tactics had changed. It started personally attacking Toothless, circling him like a predator and charging him at top speeds. Eventually, it even tried climbing the dragon's leg, and suddenly, it was like all hell broke loose.

Toothless tensed all over, staring at the speck like it was prey. It stood still for a few moments, mocking his aggression, before the dragon pounced upon it. With his much heavier weight pressed firmly on the creature, Toothless was sure that it had been crushed, and he began returning his attention to-

Wait. It was back again, this time a little farther away from him. The dragon began to growl, creeping toward the nuisance. Using his exceptional hunting skills, the speck was once again dead under Toothless's clawed paws.

But for some reason, this seemingly immortal animal kept disappearing and reappearing, escaping death at the last moment. The dragon soon became infuriated, and his actions reflected his mood. Like an animal possessed, roars and growls burst forth from the dragon's throat. He began to pounce on the speck with increasing irritation and recklessness, and soon, his lack of success led him to destroying everything in his path in pursuit of his foe's defeat. Desperate, he even threw several plasma-hot fireballs at the creature, but it still remained completely unharmed. This sort of durability was impossible to Toothless-inexcusable. He could not allow the aberration to escape.

If he had too, Toothless would follow the speck to the ends of the earth. Nothing mattered as long as it was eliminated.

Toothless's focus was soon broken by his Viking boy, who had started making a very strange sound. It was guttural and loud, like the snorts of livestock. For a second, the dragon even wondered if the child was choking. But the happy expression that humans often wore was glued to his face, so that theory was immediately discarded.

The speck temporarily forgotten, Toothless moaned inquisitively. He had never heard a sound quite like the boy's current one before-though maybe Viking behaviors similar to it. The boy's face was scrunched up, and he was rolling on the ground almost hysterically. He was really, really amused, the dragon realized, and this was his way of expressing it.

The odd sounds died down, and the boy managed to get a few words out.

"Toothless, look."

Those words he recognized and understood quite easily, so he gave his friend his undivided attention.

The boy held up one of his shiny Viking tools, showing it to Toothless for him to examine. He didn't understand the significance of the tool, but the dragon waited patiently for the child to explain.

"Light reflects off the hammer. See?" the boy told him, shifting the hammer to catch the light of the sun. The happy, but smug expression was fighting its way back onto his face-what did the Vikings call it? A "smile"?-but Toothless didn't understand why.

Still looking smug, the boy pointed toward the ravine's floor, where the speck was now located. At the sight of the thing, Toothless began to growl, but the Viking brought his attention back to the hammer. His neon green gaze flickering between both locations, the dragon soon realized that whenever the hammer shifted, the speck shifted as well. The creature wasn't a creature at all-just a trick of the light.

Narrowing his eyes at his companion, Toothless released an exasperated roar. He didn't enjoy being tricked, but the boy was making the sound again. The dragon had never seen the child having so much fun, so he did not dare spoil it...yet. But that did not stop the dragon from looking annoyed-after all, the boy was laughing at Toothless's stupidity. In fact, the apparent hilarity of it all had paralyzed the boy, and his hammer slipped out of his hand.

Seeing an opportunity to regain his pride, Toothless snatched up the hammer with his jaws and began running it around the ravine. It was not long before the boy realized what had occurred, and his sounds of amusement stopped abruptly. No longer so entertained, he began chasing after the dragon, yelling unhappily as he did so.

"Toothless, I need that! No, don't drop it in the pond-"

## 15. The Tether

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*This chapter is pretty much a lead-in to the next one, where you'll get Toothless's first real venture into Viking territory. I'll make sure to post the next one (which should be pretty exciting) asap.\*\***

**\*\*I've really been trying to work on my descriptions, so if you could tell me how I'm coming along, that would be awesome!\*\***

**\*\*Also, one of my reviewers asked about the fate of that poor hammer from the previous chapter. \*\*Good question! I almost left that unaddressed. In truth, \*\*I intended to leave it a bit ambiguous, allowing the reader to decide. But...if you must hear what I imagined while writing it, you will be happy to know that Hiccup ultimately**



retrieved it-after a bit of swimming, of course. Luckily for him, the pond's not that deep. But Toothless still had a good laugh about it, or whatever dragons do to express amusement.\*\*

\*\*If you're curious about how I characterized Toothless in this story, I posted an explanation on my profile. I was going to put it here, but I thought that'd annoy people. It actually explains a lot about the personality I created for him, so check it out.  
\*\*

\*\*Anyway, enjoy this chapter! And stay tuned!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>The boy soon figured out a successful way to keep Toothless occupied while he modified the saddle. Not so surprisingly, a heaping bucket of fish could distract the dragon for almost a half hour. Toothless grew bored easily, but he was never bored while eating. That activity was almost always pleasurable, especially after he had experienced near starvation only a little while ago. So the dragon lay sprawled on the ground, completely shoving his dark head into the basket to reach the remaining fish. Meanwhile, the boy sat next to him-probably adjusting complex devices that Toothless couldn't hope to understand.<p>

When the dragon finally pulled his head out of the hamper, he noticed a few serious changes to the boy's riding apparatus. There was a metallic pedal hanging off the side of the saddle, and a leather tether that connected the dragon to his rider. The boy was obviously eager to test out the additions, and he quickly jumped on Toothless's back with Viking tools belted around his waist. They once again struggled to escape the ravine's rocky, steep walls, but eventually cleared them using a mixture of gliding and careful navigation on Toothless and Hiccup's parts, respectively.

Once they were free of the ravine, they landed a bit roughly, forcing the dragon to skid his feet along the muddy ground to slow their velocity. Toothless guessed that his rider was still acclimating to the attachments he had just installed, which would explain their now increased difficulty with flying. But no harm had been done-yet.

Dismounting, the boy began guiding his dragon through the forest, saying things like "Come on, Toothless," or "We're almost there." From these snippets of Viking speech, Toothless could deduce that the child was leading him somewhere. They navigated their way through the arboreal landscape for a few minutes, eventually arriving at a cliff. It was carpeted with wind-blown grass, but stony underneath, and jutted out toward the infinite blue sky like a jagged tooth. At the edge of the overhang, Toothless noticed a sturdy tree stump. The remaining pieces of the trunk had probably been blown over by the altitude's exceptionally strong wing.

The boy approached the tree trunk and proceeded to tie a rope around its base. He then brought the other end back to Toothless, thus attaching it to the saddle. After brief contemplation, the dragon realized what the rope was for. The boy had probably grown tired of the constant falls, and the rope would now act as a failsafe, tethering them to the ground. With it in place, they could perfect their new form of flying without risk of injury.

Giving Toothless a quick pat, the boy simultaneously re-mounted the dragon and took out a piece of Viking "paper". The wind soon started to pick up, and Toothless instinctively unfurled his dark wings, even without his rider's request. The strong gusts soon caught in his thin sheets of skin, and the two friends rose off the ground-but only slightly this time. Experimenting with the new pedal, the boy soon determined which of its positions corresponded with certain navigational directions, and would then allow Toothless to land. It was definitely a learning process, and it took a lot of time for the boy to draw a guide for himself.

But every time the pair took flight, Toothless began to notice the rope wearing away. When he saw it get especially thin, the dragon decided to land and roar to the boy, hoping to notify him of its state. Before he got the chance, though, the rope snapped completely, and they were flung backwards by the wind, smashing through shrubs and tree branches. The sensation unpleasantly reminded Toothless of his first fall from Berk's sky, after he had been trapped by the Viking device.

Rolling over and shaking off the memory, Toothless turned to his equally disoriented rider, who was beside him on the ground. He felt a tug of the boy's weight on his side, as if he was dragging the child with his movements. When he got a good look at the boy, the dragon realized that \_was \_the case. The tether still connected them together, and whenever Toothless moved, the Viking would be towed against his will. Immediately, the dragon knew to stay still while the boy assessed the issue, and hopefully, corrected it.

He tugged briefly at the tether, moaning, "Ahhh, great."

It seemed like he was dreading something, and Toothless did not want his rider to be distressed, so he tried biting the leather tether. However, whenever he moved, the boy was pulled off his feet and thrown in front of the leather rope. He cried for Toothless to stop, and he complied, allowing the Viking boy to stumble to his feet.

"We've gotta find another way to cut this," the boy said, fingering the tether with a pensive expression on his face.

Then, that expression quickly turned into a mixture of dread and exasperation, and he began pulling Toothless along, back into the forest.

"This...is not gonna be fun. Come on, Toothless. We've got a pit stop to make."

The dragon understood pieces of the phrases, such as "not fun," "come on," and, of course, his name. The first piece was not very encouraging, which made Toothless a bit reluctant. But if the child insisted that they go to this "not fun" place, then the dragon would do it. In truth, he would follow his boy anywhere, no matter how unpleasant the destination.

Somehow, his tether to the Viking child had become more than physical.

## 16. Hiccup

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*As promised, here's the next part. We'll finally get to see Toothless actually venture into the Viking's settlement, which should be fun. \*\***

**\*\*And Hiccup's name will finally be revealed! (Another big relief for me. Enough with these vague nouns!)\*\***

**\*\*Even better, Astrid's first appearance (sort of). She won't exactly be seen, but you'll hear her. \*\***

**\*\*Other notable appearances include a sheep, and that random Viking that said hello to Hiccup that one time!\*\***

**\*\*I also reread some of my other chapters and jeez...some of my stuff is sooo cheesy. I don't know what makes it that way, but I keep laughing at the some of the "meaningful" things I try to write.\*\***

**\*\*And because I haven't thanked you beautiful people in a while, you all need to know that I am so thankful for all the support you've given me. Over 100 followers and 60 Favorites? That's insane! Thank you all so much! \*\***

**\*\*Well, here you go! Enjoy and hopefully ignore my cheesiness! \*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Terror and curiosity-that was what Toothless felt as they approached the Viking settlement.<p>

As they had trekked through the forest, the intense smell of humans had met Toothless's nostrils, notifying him of their destination. The boy was apparently taking the dragon to his settlement, as if there was nothing wrong with that. Had the child not realized the sheer number of blood-thirsty Vikings living there? Or their feud with the dragons? How about the pointy weapons stored there?

Then he remembered that the boy was a Viking himself, and he probably didn't recognize how dangerous his own kind was. Toothless forgot the child's species on a near daily basis-the boy was so different than the other Vikings he had seen. So much kinder, quieter, and smarter, in Toothless's opinion.

The boy may take kindly to Toothless's existence, but the dragon doubted that the child's violent kin would welcome his presence. Therefore, all of his instincts told him to run back to the ravine, even if it meant dragging the boy against his will. They would be better off that way, anyway. After all, the boy wouldn't have spent so much time in the ravine if he was content in the settlement. Toothless often wondered why the boy didn't just stay with him-they'd both be happier that way.

But he had promised that he would follow the boy anywhere, even if it

was somewhere this dangerous.

The child brought Toothless to the edge of the pine trees, where the Vikings' houses were now visible. Toothless was first struck by how different it looked from the ground, as opposed to the dragon's eye view. For once, he could appreciate the Vikings' craftsmanship on the buildings and other creations up close. He was still scared, yes, but also intrigued by all the unique items that surrounded him. As the boy stealthily pulled him forward, Toothless examined every shingle, firepit, and board-excited by it all. The boy was a bit impatient at the dragon's meandering, which he probably thought would get them caught. But Toothless couldn't help it-the child had grown up with all these neat objects, but the dragon was exploring it all for the first time.

As they turned a corner, dragon and rider heard the sound of an approaching human, and the boy pushed Toothless out of sight. The person passed unsuspectingly, addressing the boy with the word "Hiccup," before walking off, his flickering orange torch making him easy to spot. Waving, the child appeared to respond to that word even though it was not one of the traditional greetings that Toothless knew. With a jolt, he realized that it was the boy's name-the one that had been a mystery for so long. He spent a few seconds trying to remember the sound of the word. What was it? High-cup? Hike-cup? Hic-cup? Yes, it was the latter. Hiccup.

What an odd name.

Excited by the new discovery, Toothless shot into view and tried to follow the departing Viking, maybe to subconsciously thank him for the information that had escaped him for so long. But the boy-"Hiccup"-pulled him in the opposite direction, toward a building that reeked of metal and flame. For some reason, it felt like home to Toothless. Maybe it was the smell of fire.

As soon as he entered, Toothless stuck his face into a nearby wooden basket. He recognized it as the one that Hiccup often used to transport fish, and wanted to check that it didn't currently contain any. After seeing its empty insides, the dragon it flung it to the side, and it smashed into several of the Vikings' devices. The commotion created an audible clattering sound.

Hiccup proceeded to shush him, taking a sharp object off the wall. Toothless wasn't afraid of it-not in the boy's hands, at least. So he let Hiccup bring it to him, and the child struggled to saw at the tether.

Suddenly, they were both startled by the sound of another Viking, fast approaching.

"Hiccup? Are you in there?" it asked, the voice much more feminine than Toothless's rider.

Their heads shot up, attention no longer focused on the weakening leather rope. Obviously distressed, Hiccup gestured for Toothless to stay still and quiet. He then went outside to greet the intruder, his distance pulling the tether taut, and he shut the doors behind him. This was meant to keep the dragon concealed, Toothless assumed.

A part of Toothless wanted to protect his friend from the Viking, but

then again, he had little to worry about from his own kind.

He started listening to Hiccup converse with the female Viking, whom was apparently named "Astrid." For some reason, she sounded aggravated, while the boy sounded nervous. It wasn't the kind of nervousness that resulted from the fear of being caught, either. It was something else...something Toothless didn't understand.

Soon enough, a nearby sheep caught the dragon's attention, and it stared at him with wide eyes. He knew that he shouldn't move-after all, Hiccup had asked him not to. But Toothless's instincts took over, and he proceeded to chase the terrified animal despite his better judgement. The boy's weight on the tether pulled him back, but the dragon fought back with superior strength. His muscles tensed, and with a final tug, Toothless actually yanked his rider through the doors and out of the building.

Unfortunately, the chase didn't last very long. Extremely panicked, Hiccup quickly mounted Toothless, simultaneously using a swift motion with the knife to cut the cumbersome tether. Then, he once again urged Toothless to take flight, and despite the mournful look the dragon gave to the nearby sheep, he obliged.

Hiccup took out the guide for his pedal, studying it closely as they flew away at dangerous speeds. For a second, he glanced back at the receding settlement, exhaling with relief. Toothless saw that he was especially focused on the increasingly smaller silhouette of the Viking girl. He wondered what she had done to warrant such abject terror from Hiccup.

## 17. Victory

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*So the story is obviously picking up a bit as the movie's climax approaches. Here, we have the "test drive" scene, which was a load of fun to write. \*\***

**\*\*I tried my best to help you guys visualize their flight, now using my developing descriptive skills. That was a bit difficult for me, but in the end, I liked the final product.\*\***

**\*\*\*Also, I owe my reviewer Eva an explanation. I left her a shout-out two chapters ago. She very helpfully gave me some advice about my writing, and even provided the excellent word "unfurled" to use when describing Toothless's wings. Unfortunately, I received a complaint about having the shout-out in the middle of the story (No hard feelings about that either! I'm glad I know that I'm not supposed to do that now!), so I removed it. But she still deserves credit for helping me out like that. So here's your permanent shout-out, Eva! Thanks again!\*\*\***

**\*\*I hope you enjoy it as much as I did! \*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Toothless thought that the trip to the Viking settlement had been

enough peril for a month, let alone two days. But Hiccup obviously had other plans. And by "other plans", it was implied that they were extremely dangerous, crazy plans.<p>

The boy wanted to go on a full test drive, this time riding over the open sea. A part of the dragon wholeheartedly agreed with this idea, hoping to reclaim the sort of mobility that he had lost with his injury. However, another part disagreed, believing that it was a recipe for disaster for both Hiccup and Toothless.

So when Hiccup had once again guided Toothless to the cliff, insisting that they take off without the tether, the dragon experienced a serious conflict within himself. Instincts battled each other ceaselessly-on one side, his desire to protect himself and his new kin, the boy; and on the other side, his innate necessity for freedom and fun. His focus became ague as they clashed, and he proceeded to stare at the sea-stack studded ocean with uncertainty.

A fall from ocean airspace could mean certain death, and the sea stacks-which could rise hundreds of feet-provided other worrisome obstacles. The more he considered the idea, the more certain Toothless became that it would result in death.

But almost like how Toothless could sense the boy's emotions, it seemed that Hiccup could do the same in turn. He patted his dragon's head comfortingly, hoping to ease his reluctance. In response, Toothless closed his neon eyes and moaned softly, hoping to kindly express that he was not inclined to take the risk.

"Come on, bud. It'll be fine," Hiccup assured the dragon. "We've practiced this a thousand times."

At that, Toothless roared indignantly, hopefully reminding the boy of all the falls, and by extension, the injuries that they had experienced during that practice.

"Fine. If you want to stay in the ravine for the rest of your life, that's up to you," he offered with an exaggerated shrug, his voice quickly becoming patronizing and smug to reveal the ultimatum behind his words. Sometimes, the child could be quite petulant and wry, especially if anyone underestimated him. He was pretty defensive that way. However, the dragon couldn't exactly complain-it was a trait that they had in common, after all.

Ultimately, the latter side of the dragon's mind had won, using his friend's bad influence as a trump card. He first exhaled with irritation, and then extended his bat-like wings, an exasperated expression contorting his features. A final surge of doubt flowed through his thoughts like a cold river, preventing him from taking off. But Hiccup's (albeit nervous) encouragement broke through his qualms, and he rose up into the sky toward the glimmering sea-an area that had once been his favorite place to fly, and hopefully would be again.

The relentless ocean winds pushed Toothless's wings upwards, bringing his body with it. He could smell the salt in the air, sprayed from the crashing waves below. The sun was even shining brightly on them, providing a special sort of warmth that only great fliers could appreciate. It was the kind of flight experience that Toothless had

dreamt about-except for a few significant changes.

He would have never imagined the Viking boy straddling his back, forcing him to abandon his nascent flying techniques for new ones that would compensate for a human presence. Moreover, he couldn't have foreseen the saddle or the other devices that the boy would bring, or even the tail-fin that was lost and had since been replaced by an acceptable, but poor substitute. But most of all-he would have never figured that he would be \_okay \_with such craziness.

Things had changed so much that Toothless hardly recognized himself or his life. He wasn't sure if that was bad or not.

They proceeded to fly straight for a while, allowing enormous sea stacks to pass far off to their sides like apathetic giants. But that wasn't the sort of easy flying they had arrived to practice.

Before studying his new flight guide, Hiccup gave his dragon another comforting pat before saying, "Okay there, bud. We're gonna take this nice and slow."

While being pet, Toothless had felt the rapid pulse near the boy's wrists. His rider was obviously terrified too, despite all the encouragement he had contributed. It made the dragon feel ashamed at his own blatant cowardice, so he resolved to follow Hiccup's example by staying focused and confident as they flew onwards.

After a few flustered mumblings, the boy repositioned the pedal, thus causing the tail prosthetic to move and stiffen to the side. Toothless was then allowed to bank to the right, soaring toward a new section of sea-stacks. But the winds were much stronger here than they were on the cliff, and his wings-unaccustomed to Hiccup's weight and the tail prosthetic in these conditions-teetered a bit, threatening to drop them out of the sky. Nevertheless, both rider and dragon fought hard to steady themselves, and their efforts were eventually met with success.

Motivated by this progress, the two friends became more reckless, their attitudes reflected by Hiccup's exhilarated comment: "Alright. It's go time. It's go time."

They dove toward the ocean's sparkling, blue surface, the wind pushing at their faces almost like a physical wall. Before they could make a splash, though, Hiccup adjusted the pedal, and their descent stopped at the last moment. It was so close that Toothless's wings even skimmed the water, spraying a sheet of droplets behind him. He soon noticed that they were approaching a particularly large sea stack with an arch running down its middle. Hiccup began shouting encouragement again, notifying the dragon that he intended them to go through the opening, so Toothless focused his attention on it with determination and narrowed eyes. This was nothing, he told himself. An amateur's trick. And Toothless...Toothless was the best flier in the world. There was no reason to be afraid, no excuse to fail. He \_could \_do this.

Before he knew it, they had passed under the monumental sea stack unharmed, and Toothless could hear his friend rejoicing above him. But then the excitement made Hiccup cocky, and he began incorrectly consulting his drawn guide. Before regaining steady flight once more, Toothless found himself slamming into several rocky sea stacks due to

the mispositioning of the tail prosthetic, thus prompting nonchalant apologies from Hiccup. After a considerable amount of angry snorts, the dragon smacked his rider with an ear appendage. He hoped that would bring the boy to his senses.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm on it," Hiccup protested, listing off a few more jumbled pedal positions. Luckily, his confusion didn't cause any more pressing wounds, and they began a steep climb into the open sky.

The endeavor was probably overly ambitious, but Toothless and Hiccup were now beyond caring. Adrenaline pumped through their veins, and fear became irrelevant. The thrill of their high altitude was all that mattered, and they were equally exhilarated by it. It was like they were conquering the sky-together.

They expressed their euphoria in different ways, of course. Hiccup yelled joyful Viking words, while Toothless let his tongue hang out and widened his eyes. But as far as the two were concerned, there were no differences between them. They were one being, two halves of a whole, climbing into the sky like they had both been born there.

But their ecstasy was cut short when the wind caught and stole Hiccup's flight guide, causing the child to scream. Toothless could feel his rider shifting dangerously in his saddle to snag it, but failed to notice the child's new tether-which now featured a removable clasp-unhook. Hiccup fell away from him, their sensation of being "one" abruptly finished. Now unable to fly without his rider, Toothless began to plummet with an anguished roar. They were dropping head first toward the island, not the ocean, panicked and screaming in ways natural to their respective species.

They struggled to meet each other as they fell, and amidst the dragon's uncontrollable midair flips and turns, Hiccup was (almost ironically) smacked farther away by the tail prosthetic he had designed. Toothless roared, fearing for both of their safety. He was going to let himself-a so-called king of the skies-die from falling, and he would fail the boy who had given him so much. He had never felt so helpless.

But Hiccup was still conscious and fighting for his life. Finally, he managed to grab hold of the tumbling dragon, attaching himself to the saddle. With the ground fast approaching, he used all his effort to force the nearly paralyzed Toothless to pull up. The dragon was swiftly shaken out of his immobility, and he proceeded to outstretch his wings. They caught the air especially painfully, the wind inflating and yanking the flaps of skin between his bones. It slowed their fall, though, but that didn't stop Toothless's agonized roar. Plus, they would still hit the ground if they didn't change direction soon. He wondered why Hiccup hadn't repositioned the tail prosthetic yet, especially now that he had caught the guide between his teeth and was currently examining it. But they were quickly moving closer to the ground, and he didn't have time to determine the best pedal position for their situation.

Toothless saw the paper blow away from them, and they quite suddenly righted themselves. Surprised, he realized that the boy was somehow correctly operating the prosthetic by pure instinct. They rapidly maneuvered around multiple sea stacks, weaving between them like flying prodigies, despite their recent difficulties. It was amazing



how Hiccup had suddenly gained this natural ability with the tail, like it was a hidden second nature all along-and only facing death had brought it into the light. Now, they were truly one being, working like a well-oiled machine, or coordinated like the limbs of a particularly agile animal. And given Hiccup's new natural skills, Toothless couldn't help but wonder if it was always meant to be this way.

With a few more thrilling tricks, such as spinning and turning on their sides, the friends made their way out of the jumble of sea stacks mostly uninjured. They now glided along the clear, open sea.

Hiccup was apparently overcome with joy at their joint achievement, because he threw up his hands and gave a sort of howl. Toothless mimicked the behavior in his own way, spewing a fireball directly in front of them. The air they were approaching was now smoldering, and unfortunately, Toothless had forgotten that his rider was not fireproof.

But regardless of the slight singeing that the Viking received, they experienced victory over many of their obstacles: the injured tail, the sea stacks, the feud, and their fear, just to name a few.

## 18. Sunset

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*Things are picking up-I promise. This is pretty much a filler chapter, even though I don't really see it that way. There is some important character development in this chapter...AND IT'S CUTE.\*\***

**\*\*Plus, Astrid's first ride is the next chapter...or at least part of it is. I'll have to see how long it gets.\*\***

**\*\*And now for some story-unrelated ranting. Skip down if you want, but I thought my fellow HTTYD 2 fans might want to hear it (vague but discernible spoilers abound): \*\***

**\*\*\*Did anyone read that article on Yahoo about how there's so few kids' movies out this summer? It talked about how moms don't want to take their kids to HTTYD 2 after...you know (VAGUE HTTYD 2 SPOILERS BEGIN HERE)...THAT tragedy in the movie. But seriously? HTTYD 2 was absolutely fantastic in regard to plot, animation, music, and pretty much everything. But nooo...something as commonplace as death is too much for kids these days to handle. Helloo?! We had things like the Lion King and Bambi when I was little, and despite a few shed tears, most people I know didn't get over-traumatized by them. They're classics, and if anything, they taught us how to handle death! (Actually, I watched Jurassic Park when I was three, and when the T-Rex ate that lawyer, I knew he was dead, and I accepted that.) Why do today's kids have to be more coddled than we were? I mean, even when I went to HTTYD, a little girl in front of me was questioning what happened to...you-know-who...and her dad just refused to tell her. She's gotta find out sometime, you know? It's an unavoidable part of life, and I think it's better to get an understanding of it**

when you're younger because it'll be easier to accept later on. Maybe you disagree about this, and you're 100% entitled to your opinions and you shouldn't get offended by what I'm saying, but this is just what I think. \*\*\*\*

\*\*Sorry for the rant, but I think there is no reason for any kid to skip a movie as fantastic as HTTYD 2. It's like skipping the Lion King just because Mufasa died.\*\*

\*\*(VAGUE SPOILERS END HERE)\*\*

\*\*Despite my ranting, I hope you enjoy! \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Using their newly perfected flight skills, Hiccup and Toothless spent the rest of the day fishing copiously, building up an appropriate appetite in the process. The boy had directed his dragon to a part of the shore where fish were abundant. Even though it was close to the Vikings' side of the island, Toothless could understand why Hiccup thought it was safe. The area was far too rocky for any fishing boats, which made it a perfect hunting ground for a stealthy dragon.<p>

However, Toothless was once again forced to change his habits. With a rider on his back, he quickly abandoned his dangerous method of breakneck nose-diving. After all, the human's fragile body was probably unprepared for a splash at that speed. Besides, diving often produced meager results anyway. By the time he might catch a single fish, all the remaining creatures would be scared away by his sudden intrusion. He recalled how often he had flown back to shore with a rumbling stomach.

Instead, the slightly burnt boy suggested a new, ingenious method to catch food. Once they had found a large group of fish, he would urge Toothless to release fireballs near their location in the water, and Hiccup would then maneuver his dragon in the opposite direction. As a result, the horde of startled fish would swim right into Toothless's open jaws or Hiccup's dexterous hands.

In a few hours' time, the exhausted pair had accrued a heaping pile of silvery fish, and they began flying back to shore. Toothless saw that the orange sun was very low in the western sky, presaging the quickly arriving night. Normally, Hiccup would be back in his Viking settlement by now, but for some reason, he had stayed. Toothless began to wonder if he was beginning to prefer a dragon's company to other humans. But he didn't pretend to understand how humans behaved socially, so he stopped wondering, focused on the matter at hand-the fish.

After landing on an extremely stony stretch of coastline, Toothless dropped the fish from his mouth, and Hiccup released them from his hands. The dragon was starving and bone-tired, so he plopped onto the ground in front of the fish. However, it appeared that Hiccup wasn't ready to relax. He immediately went to a nearby forest to gather some wood, and when he returned, he started rubbing some rocks and sticks together. For a while, Toothless watched with confusion before realizing that the boy was actually \_trying to light a fire\_.

Dragons don't usually laugh. It is an exclusively human behavior. But after spending so much time with Hiccup, Toothless had started adopting some of his mannerisms. And nothing made him more inclined to chuckle than the boy's fruitless attempt to use rocks and sticks to light a fire, especially with a dragon nearby.

"You could help, you know," Hiccup huffed with irritation.

In response, Toothless released a concentrated fireball, which easily lit the wood ablaze. He saw the child blink a little at the strong heat, probably remembering his last unhappy experience with fire, which had occurred only a little while ago. His brown hair had been burnt and stiffened by the heat, and it still smelled of smoke. Moreover, a coating of soot covered his freckled cheeks.

After a tired moan from Toothless, Hiccup finally settled down, leaning against his friend's scaly side. Toothless knew that Vikings had strange eating habits—he had realized that the first time Hiccup had brought him food. So when the boy mounted a fish on a stick and held it over the fire, instead of charring it or eating it raw, Toothless didn't bother questioning the action.

They sat comfortably in front of the colorful sunset for a while, leaning against one another as Toothless slurped up his fish and Hiccup waited for his food to cook. To anyone else, the scene would have looked bizarre and abnormal. Any other Viking and dragon's first instincts would have been to attack each other, but no such ideas crossed the pair's minds. Everything about one another's company screamed comfort and belonging, and they no longer doubted the rightfulness of their friendship.

When looking back on Hiccup's first attempts to fly, Toothless scolded himself for being so uncooperative. Maybe humans couldn't have wings and dragons couldn't have hands; But if the friends had proven anything, it was that dragons could have humans and humans could have dragons. With the Viking on his back or at his side, a whole new world of possibilities had opened up. He wouldn't go back to the old ways for anything—even his tail-fin.

Perhaps as a joke or a genuine expression of gratitude, Toothless regurgitated a raw fish head for his rider, letting the saliva-soaked remnant slide from his throat to the ground beside the boy. As expected from the picky eater, the boy kindly refused the morsel, raising his currently cooking fish to convey that he had enough food. With the effort made, the dragon keenly returned to eating.

Suddenly, a group of intruders interrupted their meal, and Toothless immediately became agitated. Four squawking dragons had arrived at the scene, perhaps from a distant land. Toothless mentally identified them using the sensory descriptions of "small," "squeaky," "flocking," and "annoying." But he had once heard Hiccup call them "Terrible Terrors," whatever that meant.

These dragons were scavengers, and they often stole from bigger predators like Vikings or other dragons. Due to that fact, Toothless growled and instinctively pulled his fish pile closer, knowing that they weren't here for a social visit. The smell of dead fish was probably redolent for miles, and these silly reptiles had come to get their share.

Once they had landed, the Terrors quickly scurried over to Hiccup and Toothless, desperate to eat some of that precious fish. One of them even took the morsel he had spat out, dragging it away from the bigger dragon. That infuriated Toothless-after all, that was Hiccup's fish, intended as a gift, and it certainly did not belong to them. Despite his irritation, he allowed the Terror to have it, aware that Hiccup didn't want it.

His attention was suddenly distracted by a fish that appeared to have suddenly gained legs, seeing as it was walking away from him in an upright position. The paralysis of shock soon disappeared when Toothless realized that the fish was still dead, and that a Terror had somehow snuck into his fish pile, attempting to carry off one of his catches. He managed to snag the fish with his teeth before it was out of reach, and the two dragons tugged on both ends for a second. But the second soon passed, and Toothless's superior strength allowed him to rip the food out of the Terror's maw, and he thus swallowed it completely. The smaller dragon's backward force caused it to fall on its bottom, now wearing a disappointed expression.

Unable to put up with any more antics, Toothless made a guttural gurgling sound. In his species' communication, the message was clear: leave, or be attacked by a more powerful dragon.

But Terrors were foolish creatures, and the disappointed one proceeded to stand his ground against Toothless, scraping his little clawed feet against the ground. Then, he inhaled, his gases probably accumulating to be lit and fired.

Amused by the display, Toothless's expression became very smug, which he hoped Hiccup would appreciate. Then, as the Terror was about to fire, opening his little jaws, Toothless released a tiny flame of his own. The fire went into the smaller dragon's mouth, filling it with smoke and probably harmlessly burning its insides-just enough to teach this idiotic creature a lesson. It fell face-first with a pitiful squeak, but Toothless wasn't about to feel guilty. The Terror had asked for it.

Smoke trailing from its nostrils, the smaller dragon stumbled away from Toothless and the fish pile. He watched it suspiciously, hoping that it would immediately leave. Unfortunately, his rider was excessively sympathetic and generous, and Hiccup began exacerbating the situation.

"Huh. Not so fireproof on the inside, are you?" Hiccup commented, later tossing the fish to the Terror and adding, "Here you go."

The small dragon was thrilled at the handout, swallowing it whole as it squeaked with excitement. Afterwards, when Hiccup leaned back against Toothless, the Terror followed him-probably seeking more handouts, the bigger dragon thought bitterly. However, to the pair's surprise, the Terror curled up next to Hiccup affectionately, allowing the human to stroke its spiky back.

As he continued staring with disbelief, Hiccup whispered one last thing: "Everything we know about you guys...is wrong."

The sentence was unintelligible to all of the dragons, especially given the complexity of the words. But as Toothless looked at his

rider-a Viking that could instantly win other dragons' trust with his generosity and kindness-he coincidentally began thinking the same thing about humans.

Well...one of them, anyway.

## 19. Astrid

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*Woohoo! Finally, a chapter with Hiccup, Astrid, and Toothless together. I portray Astrid as a bit mean at first (because that's how she acted in the movie) but she'll get better. That's also why Toothless doesn't ship Hiccstrid at first. \*\*\*\*Also, this chapter got a bit lengthy (my longest ever, actually), so I couldn't fit in the flight yet. But you'll see most of the parts prior to that. I know you guys are getting antsy for some action, but I thought the test drive chapter was enough to compensate for the last one. This interaction with Astrid will hopefully hold you guys over.**

**\*\***

**\*\*Okay, I've got a couple guest reviewers to answer (I always try to answer questions or reviews), so ignore this bit if you're not one of them. Read if you're curious, because it could clarify some things.\*\***

**\*\*\*\*I was asked about how I had Toothless saying that he is \_Hiccup's dragon\_. Good question! That is quite on purpose actually, and it took me a lot of contemplation to put that in there. However, if you remember "The Tether" you hear Toothless calling Hiccup "his boy." That means that he feels like Hiccup belongs to him in some way. Now, because the lonely Toothless \_wants\_ to feel wanted, especially by Hiccup, he would probably hope that Hiccup feels the same way and calls Toothless \_his\_ \_dragon\_. You're right-Toothless is proud, and if Hiccup kept him chained up and flew him for personal gain, he wouldn't call himself Hiccup's dragon. But after their last flight together, he believes that they are two halves of a whole, and therefore tries to keep balance in their relationship. So Hiccup is equally Toothless's boy as Toothless is Hiccup's dragon. Think of it this way-if you are friends with someone (a guy just for simplicity), you are his friend, and he is yours. Possession, when the relationship is equal, goes both way. If you think it's out-of-character, that's \_100%\_ \_okay\_ and I'm actually really glad you look so far into my writing. But now that he trusts Hiccup, I think it makes sense.\*\*\*\***

**\*\*As always, I hope you all enjoy the chapter.\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Hiccup returned Toothless to the ravine very late that night, leaving for his Viking settlement as soon as they had landed. The dragon didn't blame him for such a sudden departure, either. After such a busy day of flying, the friends had been extremely exhausted. And unlike Toothless, whom could just plop down on the grass and fall asleep, humans just <em>had</em> to nest in their little wooden huts.

He truly wondered what was so comforting about a box of wood. After all, wood was hard and oftentimes splintery, and the box would probably be overly confining. The bare ground, meanwhile, was covered with soft dirt and grasses and sat under the open sky. If given the choice, Toothless would choose an earthen floor, and not one of wood. But humans were strange, and he supposed that their fragile bodies couldn't handle constant exposure to the elements.

So Hiccup had left, and despite being alone, Toothless felt plenty content. He no longer doubted whether his rider would return the next day-after all, Hiccup had never let him down before. Plus, his hunger for both food and flight had been fully satiated.

Comforted by all these factors, Toothless began to stumble drowsily toward the edge of the ravine, hoping to sleep in the shelter of the trees.

He originally intended to hang from their branches, but with all the fish in his stomach, he believed that his body was too heavy to do so. Plus, he was at ease in the ravine-why would he need to sleep defensively? Nothing had attacked him there thus far.

So Toothless began circling beneath the trees, releasing a steady stream of fire to roast and warm the soil below him. He then flopped onto the ground with a soft moan of fatigue, happy to be abeyant. A few seconds after laying down, sleep began to overcome the dragon's consciousness, and he was enveloped in a deep, dreamless slumber.

\* \* \*

><p>This particular sleep was unwilling to let Toothless out of its clutches, and every time he tried to wake himself, he dropped back down, snoozing yet again. When he finally managed to shake himself out of his lethargy, his mind was still quite sluggish, and it took him several minutes to acclimate to his surroundings.<p>

Given the lighting outside of the trees, Toothless could see that he had slept through the day. The sun was inching very close to the western horizon, meaning that it was probably late afternoon. It was much longer than he had intended to sleep, but all that flying and fishing had really drained him.

Suddenly, Toothless heard a foreign voice nearby-probably in the ravine with him. Normally, the dragon's hearing could detect every sound for miles, but it had been rendered useless while he had slept so soundly. For all he knew, the (probably human) intruder could have been there for hours, and Toothless hadn't noticed. Adrenaline pumped through his heart, thankful that the person hadn't killed him in his sleep.

The dragon wasn't exactly eager to cower, but not all humans were like Hiccup-in both personality and physical stature. Without flying ability, Toothless was not sure if he would survive an encounter with a hostile Viking. So he kept quiet, camouflaging his dark body in the shadow of the trees.

Upon listening to the intruder further, Toothless realized that the voice was actually familiar.

"...Start talking," the feminine voice demanded with apparent antagonism, evocating the memory of the settlement's Viking girl-the one Hiccup had been nervous around. "Are you training with someone?"

Yes, it was definitely that girl. Her smell-which was a mixture of sweat, fire, leather, and something sweet-indicated as much.

Upon continued listening, Toothless heard Hiccup's voice as well. It was flustered and babbling in response to the female's accusatory questions, meaning that he was still nervous around her. Despite the boy's anxiety, he hoped that his rider would gain the courage to shoo the intruder away, thus allowing Hiccup and Toothless to return to uninterrupted flying. But given the fear the child was displaying, it was an unlikely outcome.

Becoming more aggressive by the second, the girl then grabbed Hiccup by his riding harness, nearly lifting the smaller Viking off the ground. The dragon was angered by such belligerence, and he instinctively moved forward to attack, knocking into a tree branch in the process. The collision made an audible crack, and Toothless retreated into the shade. The element of surprise had been lost, the dragon realized-and the girl was carrying a lethal looking axe. In regard to this information, he decided to postpone the attack, seeing as she hadn't hurt Hiccup-yet.

In response to the sound, she grabbed the boy by the harness yet again, throwing him to the ground inconsiderately. Twirling the axe in her hand, she stepped nonchalantly over Hiccup's body and narrowed her eyes in Toothless's direction. The dragon was deciding whether to attack based on her recent treatment of his rider, but Hiccup quickly sprang to his feet. While the girl approached Toothless's hiding place, the boy continued rambling to her, trying to block her path and protect his dragon. He even grabbed her arm, placing it on his own chest. But the girl would have none of that, and she bent his arm back, pushing Hiccup to the ground as he cried out in pain.

Toothless seethed with anger, but it was obvious that Hiccup was trying to prevent this girl from discovering him. So he stayed in his hiding place, wondering how Hiccup could tolerate living with such pugnacious people.

But when she kicked Hiccup and began dropping her heavy axe on his stomach, Toothless couldn't help but roar with outrage, coming out of the shadows.

The girl spotted him immediately, screaming at the currently-rising Hiccup to "get down," even though she proceeded to knock him over herself. But to Toothless, the movement looked like another attack, so he charged at her with a furious screech. Meanwhile, the girl yelled for Hiccup to run, raising her axe to fight back.

Just as Toothless was about to lunge, his rider intervened, pushing the girl out of the way by the handle of her axe. Unbalanced, she fell to the ground, the weapon sliding out of reach. Toothless, meanwhile, landed on bare earth, and he stomped with rage at his missed opportunity. He was about to try another attack when Hiccup blocked his path, putting himself between the dragon and the Viking girl with arms outstretched to stop their attacks on each

other.

Toothless, of course, couldn't hurt his rider. So he sought to move around him, sure that the boy had no idea what he was doing. After all, the girl had hurt him. Why would he protect her?

"It's okay. It's okay," the boy chanted reassuringly to both his dragon and the girl. But neither of them were inclined to listen.

Toothless stood on his back legs, his wings outstretched to make himself look as threatening as possible. They blotted out the sun like a dark cloud-an ability befitting of the unholy offspring of lightning and death itself, or so the Vikings called him.

But Hiccup stood his ground, his hands still outstretched. "She's a friend," he said slowly, hoping that the dragon would get the message.

And Toothless understood-he just refused to believe it.

But as he stared at his rider-the only person that he trusted, sometimes even more than he trusted himself-the dragon had no choice but to back down. If Hiccup thought that the girl wasn't a threat, then Toothless would have to respect that. He knew that in some cases, rider knew better than dragon, and dragon knew better than rider. It all depended on experience-and Hiccup had more experience with Vikings than Toothless did. So the dragon cooperated, falling back to all fours. He still growled at the girl, though, teeth bared and pupils contracted.

The girl rose to a crouching stance, staring at the dragon with horror. He didn't like that she was still moving, instead of sitting terrified on the ground. In response, Toothless moved forward again, hoping to scare her out of her wits. He thought that was a good plan. Scaring wasn't hurting, but it could regain their security just as easily.

But Hiccup moved in front of the dragon, putting his hands on Toothless's head to block his advance. The dragon's strength slid the boy forward a bit, but failed to clear a path. Unfortunately, the child was determined to protect that stupid Viking girl.

"You scared him," Hiccup said as he struggled to keep Toothless at bay. But he wasn't strong enough to completely stop him, and the dragon continued to gain footing.

The fearful girl did the opposite, retreating from the pair as she replied indignantly, "I scared him? Who...is 'him'?"

Hiccup temporarily stopped pushing the dragon backwards, but still stood in between the hostile parties. He introduced Toothless to her, and introduced the girl as "Astrid". But the dragon already knew that information, and quickly grew impatient. He hissed and growled menacingly at the girl, and to his delight, she finally began running off. As she departed toward the crack in the rocks, she looked at Hiccup with a look that clearly said "Are you insane?"

But her opinions meant nothing to Toothless, whom was just glad that she was gone. He thought his rider would be pleased too. After all,



they had escaped the Viking girl without getting hurt or hurting anyone else. However, Hiccup was not so delighted, and he quickly stated that they were as good as dead.

Sure that his rider was exaggerating, Toothless waddled away with a snort. But Hiccup was relentless, and he immediately began to patronize his dragon for his behavior.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. Where d'you think you're going?"

Hiccup followed Toothless, quickly mounting the dragon's back and pulling him in the opposite direction. "C'mon, bud. We've gotta make this right."

Toothless was immensely reluctant to take flight. He had no interest in comforting the barbaric Viking girl, but his rider did. After a few seconds of Hiccup incessantly yelling at the dragon to take off, Toothless finally obliged, and they rose over the island.

It wasn't hard to predict where the girl was heading-she was returning to the Viking settlement. So the pair soared in that direction, keeping a close eye on the ground for her. Hiccup wanted to catch her before she whipped the Vikings into a blood-thirsty, dragon-slaughtering frenzy. With that possibility in mind, Toothless wondered why he and Hiccup just didn't leave the island. Then, they would be able to avoid all the risks of being caught. And given the way the girl had treated the boy, he didn't see a reason for them to stay. The Vikings probably wouldn't miss him.

As Toothless contemplated this, Hiccup spotted the girl running frantically through the forest, and urged the dragon to set them down. But Toothless was still very angry, and that made him mischievous. Instead of fulfilling Hiccup's request, he waited for the girl to jump over a fallen log. When she rose high enough, Toothless grabbed her with his feet, lifting her high over the earth.

She screamed, of course, and that gave the dragon satisfaction. The girl was mean, and he hoped to teach her a lesson. He continued to bring her higher, eventually dropping her carelessly in the branch of a tall tree. Toothless balanced on the branch next to her as she struggled to hold on, and the trunk began to bend under his weight. The dragon was extremely amused by the situation, and to his relief, Toothless found that his rider didn't even scold him for ignoring his instructions.

The girl proceeded to yell at Hiccup, demanding that she be brought down and so on. Toothless couldn't help thinking that she was a brat, but Hiccup wanted to plead with her-talk with her. But she was uncooperative, screeching at Hiccup contemptuously.

After a few sentences that sounded like begging, the boy extended his hand to the girl, as if he wanted her to ride Toothless with him. The dragon was not fond of that thought, and he rejected riding with anyone but Hiccup. He wondered why the boy was so inclined to be kind to this girl, especially after she had been so rude to him.

Toothless had never met a Night Fury of the opposite gender, so he had never experienced romantic affection. But he had seen it between

other dragons, and he wondered whether the same male-female relationships also applied to humans. Was Hiccup trying to...attract this "Astrid"? The thought was so utterly bizarre that Toothless initially thought that it couldn't be true. But it would explain the boy's nervousness, or his tolerance of the girl's pretentious behavior.

Whatever the case, Hiccup had horrible taste, and Toothless was sure that there were nicer human females out there. Someone had to tell the boy that, and the dragon would be the one to do it.

So when the girl managed to climb on the growling Toothless's back, he had already resolved to scare her away from Hiccup-forever. In his mind, he was only doing what was best for his rider.

"Now get me down," she commanded as bossily as ever. Hiccup repeated the command as more of a request, but Toothless didn't care. He had no intention of taking "Astrid" down yet. No, she still wasn't getting the message Toothless was trying to send, so he would have to try harder to scare her out of her own personality, and away from Hiccup

Toothless unfurled his wings, a mischievous expression contorting his features. As Hiccup began comforting the Viking female, the dragon suddenly took off, immediately going into a steep aerial climb that could knock any untethered rider off. But Toothless wasn't exactly concerned about that.

In truth, the dragon was nothing but jovial as he listened to the acrophobic Viking girl's terrified screams.

## 20. Lessons

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*Wow, I really like this chapter. I don't know whether the writing is that good, but I really like all of Toothless's internal thoughts and how the characters are developing. You may think the opposite-I don't know. But in my opinion, this is the best chapter thus far.\*\***

**\*\*\*\*And for that reviewer who kept asking for Toothless to show confusion at some of Hiccup and Astrid's more...romantic behaviors, I did my best to fulfill your request. It will continue into the next chapter. I hope I made you happy! :) And I think you're also the same reviewer who told me about the "axe" thing. Yeah, I realized that too. The thing is...every chapter from now on is pretty action-packed, so I won't exactly have time to make Toothless discover what an axe is. The implied idea from here on out is that Toothless has spent so much time with Hiccup that he now understands a lot about Viking culture. I know it's not exactly realistic, and that may bother you, but it'll allow me to focus on the more important plot points. If it makes you all feel better, don't think that Toothless actually knows the word "axe" or the names of any other Viking objects, but recognizes them by how they look. I mean, he doesn't exactly know the word "exhausted," but I have him using that too. Toothless's POV is a tricky thing-he's not human and he**

doesn't speak English as we know it, so you have to just accept that he shouldn't know all the things he knows. His POV shouldn't even be in words, actually, but that's the only way I can create it. But thank you for trying to help me out! I always appreciate reviewers that are trying to improve my story! \*\*\*\*

\*\*Also, can I just say how thankful I am for how much attention this story is getting? I am unworthy of so many follows, favorites, and reviews! I've said it once and I'll keep saying it-you guys are the best!\*\*

\*\*Anyway, I hope you all loveeee this chapter. I know I do.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Human screams were normally an unpleasant sound to Toothless, but to hear Astrid panic in such a way was very entertaining. Hiccup was much less amused by his antics, though, and he screamed at Toothless to stop.<p>

"Toothless! What is wrong with you? Bad dragon!" he chastised loudly. Of course, the dragon did not appreciate being addressed in such a way. As much as he loved his rider, he was not about to be scolded like a small child-he simply wouldn't have it. So Toothless decided that there were two lessons to be learned here today-one for Hiccup, and one for Astrid.

He was not a horse-he had opinions and will of his own. The two friends' decision to fly together was a mutual one, not the rider's sole decision. In truth, Hiccup had done many generous things for Toothless, but he was a bit domineering when they flew, and the dragon wanted that to end. At this point, the dragon figured that a little rebellion was overdue.

And as for Astrid-well...her attitude adjustment was more than overdue.

Nevertheless, he stabilized his flight, the steep aerial climb abruptly cut short. Hiccup thought his dragon had finally started behaving himself, and apologized to the girl.

"He's not usually like this," the boy tried explaining, but nearly as soon as the girl had regained comfort, Toothless turned onto his back and let himself plummet toward the rough seas below. As expected, screams returned, deafening and piercing. He turned at the last second, though, spinning back to a viable position, which prevented them from reaching terminal velocity.

That didn't stop them from hitting the water, however, and they submerged for a second. The dragon quickly surfaced again, using his powerful black wings to propel himself upwards. But the troublemaker dragon wasn't finished yet. He began diving through the rising waves, soaking himself and his riders.

He heard Hiccup yelling at him, but he mostly ignored what he said: "Toothless! What are you doing? We need her to like us!"

Hiccup wanted her to like him, not necessarily needed. And Toothless certainly did not want her to like either of them. Any other Viking female was fine. But this one...this one was so

mean!

He began climbing vertically toward the clouds, and once they had reached a breath-taking height, the dragon began to spin like a propellor. Indeed, he was unleashing his most dangerous stunts for his riders tonight, and it felt good to do such thrilling tricks again. It also felt good to teach the silly humans a lesson or two.

Hiccup had stopped demanding things. It was getting him nowhere. So he waited impatiently for his dragon to stop, irritation evident in his voice. "Thanks for nothing, you useless reptile."

His amusement unaffected by the insult, Toothless dropped out of the sky again, spinning as he did so. The free fall was exhilarating-and he knew that Hiccup felt the same, seeing as he had stopped yelling for Toothless to stop. In fact, the boy was probably enjoying the tricks. That was why they weren't his lesson. No, the disobedience was his lesson.

But the girl couldn't take much more. "Okay, I'm sorry," the girl appeased breathlessly. "I'm sorry. Just get me off of this thing."

Toothless recognized those words as an apology, and an apology was a start. His lesson had gotten through to her. And humans were like any animals-they needed to be rewarded for cooperation.

So the dragon abruptly ended the demonstration of his skills, steadying and smoothing his flight path. Their gliding was relaxed now, and they flew toward the sunset with a sense of ease.

Upon glancing back, Toothless saw that Astrid was holding onto Hiccup tightly, her arms wrapped around his stomach. He realized with a jolt that he had probably made matters worse-she was touching him physically, now-leaning against him with closed eyes like she depended upon him. And even worse-Hiccup looked positively delighted by it.

Toothless wanted the boy to be happy-truly. But this girl...this girl didn't seem very nice.

But sometimes, appearances were deceiving. After all, when he had first met Hiccup, he had hated him. It took months to completely gain each other's trust-to learn about each other's true natures. Maybe...maybe Astrid was like that too.

As he flew into a particularly thick, nebulous cloud, the dragon realized why he was so opposed to the idea of Hiccup liking this girl. Even when he thought about other human women, he disliked them equally, meaning that he was using her personality as an excuse.

As he looked at the girl, he imagined the boy actually liking his Viking settlement. He could see him settling down there with a mate and human fledglings, his life too hectic and full of responsibility to spend his time flying dragons. A part of him always feared that the boy's loyalty was a childish attribute, and he would grow out of it one day, becoming a real Viking in the process-the loud and dangerous kind that Toothless had always disliked. He knew from other dragons that romantic love was a sign of maturity-of age and change.

Perhaps Hiccup would grow old and die before Toothless, leaving the dragon hopelessly and completely alone.

Toothless had experienced a lot of change lately, and he would have appreciated some constants in his life-his rider, for one.

Dragons kept their mates or their young for only a short time before abandoning them, quickly continuing their usual routines. It was in their nature. However, humans weren't dragons; They stayed with their families until the very end...and Toothless...Toothless wasn't \_really\_ Hiccup's family.

His concentration was interrupted by a shift in Astrid's weight as she tried to touch the clouds. The dragon knew the action was foolish-clouds were just water droplets, after all. But Astrid was apparently amazed by things as trivial as droplets, seeing as she smiled and raised her arms to touch them further.

Toothless couldn't help but end his hostility toward her. After all, the girl was just so...innocent. She was just another human waiting to be shown dragons' true nature-to be shown that violence wasn't the \_only\_ way. Hiccup had realized that about Astrid all along-and had also been the first to realize that the feud could end.

Hiccup always saw the best in every living thing. Such naive trust oftentimes annoyed Toothless, but it was also why the dragon held him in such high esteem and affection. The boy was just so completely and inherently good that neither species, human or dragon, deserved to have him-they were both too morally flawed. That was probably why Hiccup rested somewhere safely in between, receiving only the best traits of the two creatures.

But Hiccup probably didn't realize this, and probably never would.

The sun finally set, and the sky was covered with a blanket of darkness. But darkness had never affected a Night Fury, which could see equally well without light. They rose high above the clouds, encouraged by the calm night. A strange assortment of colorful lights presented itself in the unobstructed sky, moving fluidly like water. Toothless had seen them many times during his travels, but the humans were easily impressed by them. They were quite beautiful, he supposed, but he had long since been disillusioned by such things.

The ride was probably getting too long in both time and distance, and Toothless had nearly brought them over the Viking settlement on the other side of the island. He doubted that the Vikings could see them given the dragon's camouflage, but the close proximity made him nervous.

But one look at the girl's utterly astonished and admiring face quelled his qualms, and he continued flying, letting his mind wander onto other matters. He simply focused on the sensation of flying, which was still his favorite activity.

"Alright, I admit it," he heard Astrid say. "This is pretty cool. It's...amazing. He's amazing."

There is a phrase in the human language that claims that, "flattery

will get you nowhere."

Its validity is exclusively human, though, and dragons remain quite unaffected by its meaning. They show rather excessive favoritism toward those that praise them, like most intelligent animals often do. In fact, after the compliment, Toothless became instantly fonder toward the Viking girl, suddenly seeing her as another friend. As she patted his side, he even reacted affectionately to her touch, giving her a soft purr that she probably couldn't hear over the wind.

He had always thought that Hiccup was the only exception to the rule-that all other Vikings were bad. But maybe...maybe he had been wrong.

## 21. Bad Instincts

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N. \*\***

**\*\*Well, Toothless is quite the troublemaker, isn't he? And his plans totally backfired too. Serves him right. \*\***

**\*\*This isn't one of my favorite chapters, but it's an important one. (It also has some Hiccstrid in it, which made it totally worth it). The climax is also really close now!\*\***

**\*\*Enjoy, dear readers! Enjoy!\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Toothless's mind had wandered off, and he flew solely based on his instincts now. He vaguely registered that Astrid and Hiccup were talking above him, though he did not understand what they were talking about.<p>

As his body controlled his movements instead of his brain, everything became a blur. There was no ocean; there was no Berk; there was only a destination. By now, he had even forgotten the Vikings currently riding him. He only knew that he had to go somewhere, no matter what he wanted or who he was. Everything else was irrelevant.

Something in Toothless subconsciously realized that the feeling was wrong, but his basic instincts were fighting against him. They managed to keep his better judgement at bay, almost as if disuse had made them stronger.

Toothless had not flown this way in a long time. He almost always knew where he was going, or why he was going there, but this instance was an exception. He remembered feeling this way before, though, but he was not aware enough to realize the cause. If he were fully cognizant, he would know that he hated the sensation of being at the mercy of his instincts. He would also know that his destination was nothing to be desired. If he arrived, it could spell certain doom for the dragon and his riders.

He dropped, soaring through a thick white fog, unaware of Hiccup's questioning. Dragons were suddenly surrounding him, flying on all sides, and he managed to avoid colliding with their fog-concealed

bodies. Even in his trance-like state, he was able to maintain his coordination.

There was a sort of chorus of screeches, roars, and moans from the various dragons, all of which betrayed fear, frustration, and a desire for safety. A fully conscious Toothless would know why they felt such things, but that wasn't the case at the moment.

As he continued flying, Toothless felt Hiccup place his hand on his head. He wanted to know what was happening, but most of all, he wanted to leave the presence of the other dragons. In any other situation, Toothless would have complied immediately. But the dragon was still not aware enough to know that his destination was bad, so he shook off Hiccup's touch.

Toothless descended again, and he was soon maneuvering between closely positioned sea stacks, eventually making his way toward a large, volcanic island. It too was partially concealed by fog, but visible veins of lava cracked through its surface, and a craggy mountain top rose above the clouds.

In his stupor, Toothless felt his body moving toward an opening in the mountainside, passing into it with an easy shift of his wings. He then proceeded to soar through a dark tunnel, which led into the heart of the volcano. The dragon subconsciously twirled and dove to avoid protruding walls or sharp stalactites, somehow familiar with the anatomy of the mountain.

They eventually arrived in a huge cavern with a floor that seemed to be an abyss. If it weren't for the strange rock formations rising from the ground, thus indicating a base, anyone would have thought that it extended into Helheim. Moreover, lava must have rested at the bottom. An orange-red glow rose from its floor along with thick coils of smoke. Plus, the temperature of the cavern was swelteringly hot.

Luckily, the change in temperature brought Toothless back to his senses, and he suddenly realized where he was.

By becoming too relaxed during his flight, his carefree mind had allowed his instincts to take over. And a dragon's first instinct while flying is to find a nest, which is exactly what he did, and shouldn't have done.

A procession of dragons flew over the gorge, dropping their kills into its opening. Toothless knew that the Queen rested below, gigantic jaws wide open, awaiting her daily-delivered meal. At the thought of her, Toothless was gripped with complete and utter terror. He immediately broke off from the procession, soaring toward the side. He hid behind a rock formation.

Toothless was too panicked and disoriented to think clearly. He wasn't quite sure how or why he had arrived at the nest, and his attention was mainly focused on rationalizing his memories. It did not occur to him that he should leave yet-his brain was far too muddled to form such thoughts. Plus, fear of the Queen had paralyzed him, and he could do nothing but cower behind the rocks.

He sensed Hiccup on his back, and that comforted him a bit. But he had flown farther into the Queen's clutches than he ever had

before-not since he had left her service, anyway. If she saw, smelled, or heard him, she would not hesitate to eat him. Queens were the only cannibalistic dragons, and that disgusted Toothless.

Then a jolt went through the dragon. He had brought Hiccup-the only person on the entire planet that he cared about-to a place where any humans, no matter how kind or generous, would be killed. How could he do something like this? If Toothless was going to die here, that was his fault. But now...now he was dragging Hiccup down with him.

He watched with apprehension as a dragon that he identified using the images of "fat," "lumpy," and "slow," fly over the cavern. He had once heard Hiccup call them something ridiculous like "Gronckle," but right now, he wasn't concerned with its name. He was worried about its fate.

Its disproportional wings struggled to carry the heavy creature, but their excessive fluttering managed to keep it airborne. It hovered over the canyon with a sort of lethargy, slowly opening its large jaws and angling itself downwards. A single, small fish slid out of its throat, descending into the cavern below, and by extension, the Queen's jaws.

The second the fish had appeared, Toothless knew that the heavy dragon was as good as dead. It had not sacrificed enough for the Queen, whom desired livestock and buckets of fish. Since she had to satiate her ceaseless hunger, she would eat the Gronckle just as easily as she would devour the fish. The cannibalism would also maintain control over her subjects, since they would be too terrified to defy her.

Sure enough, the Queen's gargantuan jaws rose out of the fog and snapped over the heavy dragon, probably swallowing it whole, and then descended back into the hole. All the dragons were seized with fear at the sight of her, and they backed into hiding places. Even Toothless began breathing heavily, his heart beating so fast that he was sure it would break out of his ribcage.

As he dealt with his panic, he heard Astrid whisper "What. Is. \_That\_?" with incredulity.

Between Toothless's heavy breathing and Astrid's words, the Queen became aware of their presence. She reemerged from the bottom of the cavern with a heart-stopping growl, probably realizing that there was a dragon who had yet to deliver his sacrifice. She waited for a second, probably smelling that he had two humans on his back, which she would certainly eat if given the chance. After all, she would eat anything.

Of course, if Toothless sacrificed his riders, he would be safe, and the Queen would ignore his mutiny. But the thought did not even cross the dragon's mind. He loved Hiccup-they were best friends, and though he might not be his family in the "human" sense, he felt like the boy was his kin, perhaps even his brother. No, he would never do something so unbelievably selfish.

Perhaps the Queen sensed his intention to rebel, because she tensed up to lunge. But the only things that Toothless really registered were Hiccup's urges to leave, which he obeyed at the last moment. Just as he took off, the Queen's jaws snapped over their former



hiding place. Any other dragon would have died, but Toothless was simply too fast, and he managed to evade her.

Toothless struggled to fly out of the cavern through an opening in the top, aware that the Queen would be hot on his heels. Luckily for him, the other dragons had been startled out of their hiding places, and they swarmed around the cavern like a tornado. This provided a sufficient distraction-enough for him to escape the Queen's jaws once again. Instead of closing them on Toothless's scaly body, she caught a different, disoriented dragon, and then wasted time pulling it into the gorge with her. By the time she would realize her mistake, Toothless would be long gone and not worth the effort to follow.

After that experience, Toothless took a lot time to calm down. His heart was still beating at a dangerous rate, and he worried that it would never slow down. But thankful words from Hiccup and Astrid made him feel a bit better about his weakness. After all, he had gotten them into that mess. It was his fault that their lives were in danger. He had never felt so guilty-probably because he had never felt responsible for anyone else before.

They flew stunned for a while, eventually returning to the ravine. Toothless had never been so happy to be back in the safety of the gorge's enclosed walls. He knew the Queen would never find him here, and that relaxed him slightly.

As they landed, he heard Astrid trying to explain the workings of the dragon nest. "It makes sense; It's like a giant beehive. They're the workers, and that's their queen. It controls them."

She skillfully jumped off of Toothless's back, running back toward the village after saying something like "Let's find your dad."

Toothless understood every word but "dad," because Hiccup had never used the term before. He wondered if it was an object that his rider had misplaced.

For some reason, Hiccup was very against finding this "dad". He stopped Astrid in her path, saying disturbing things like "they'll kill Toothless."

Judging by their tones of voice and body language, it appeared that Hiccup and Astrid were having some sort of argument involving Toothless's safety. The boy hoped to protect the dragon at all costs, while the girl wanted to do something risky.

Once again, the dragon felt a surge of affection for his rider. He was just as determined to protect Toothless as Toothless was determined to protect him. The last thing either one wanted to do was put each other in danger.

Luckily, Hiccup seemed to have won the argument, and despite what Toothless had expected, Astrid accepted defeat rather gracefully. It seemed that his rider was worried about something else...something that he would have to face. But Hiccup rarely talked about his life in the settlement, so Toothless couldn't identify the problem. He wished he knew, though. He wished he knew very much.

Hiccup and Astrid stood silently beside the pond for few seconds, perhaps collecting their thoughts. Then, the girl punched him in the arm, claiming that it was payback for "kidnapping" her-whatever that meant. The dragon was beyond attacking her for such a light punch, but he did respond to the boy's confused stare with an equally confused moan.

Then the girl did something else-something that Toothless didn't recognize. As the boy rubbed his shoulder, she pulled his face close to hers, placing her lips against his cheek. Astrid then released him, unwilling to meet his eyes.

Did she just...peck him? Do humans do that?

"That's for...everything else," she said quietly before sauntering back to the village.

The action was definitely not hostile, as far as Toothless could tell. In fact, it seemed affectionate-very affectionate. It was so affectionate that Hiccup was obviously stunned at the gesture, and he stood wide-eyed for a while.

Toothless approached him, moving to his side. He looked and purred at his rider with perplexity, wondering what the lip-peck could mean. He hoped that his rider would explain. But Hiccup seemed embarrassed by what had occurred, and he rejected Toothless's implied questions with a rude "What are you looking at?"

Toothless didn't take that to heart, though. The boy's behavior was indication enough of what the lip-peck really meant.

## 22. Cruelty

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N. \*\***

**\*\*Okay, this is my new longest chapter. There was literally no way to break this up into two parts. \*\***

**\*\*The chapter's also seriously action based, and a bit violent, but if you could handle the movie, you can handle this. \*\*\*\*Plus, it features appearances by Astrid and Stoick, so that's exciting!\*\***

**\*\*I also apologize in advance for any choppy writing. There was so much action that I didn't really have time for long descriptions.\*\***

**\*\*Also, I'd just like point out some silliness on Hiccup's part. If he really wanted to save Toothless from being captured by the Vikings, why didn't he get on his back and fly away? He knew that Toothless couldn't fly out without him. There's probably a legitimate reason for this out there, but it would have made sense if they just flew to safety.\*\***

**\*\*Well, I hope you'll excuse the chapter length and enjoy!\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>The next day, Toothless wasn't all that active. He mostly sat beside the pond, trying to shake the feeling of the Queen's piercing eyes, or block out the sound of her growl, which continued to ring in his ears.<p>

Toothless had feared for his life before-all dragons had. But there was something about the Queen that was so completely terrifying that it paralyzed him-haunted him. He could not stop the horror that seized his heart when he thought of her, or the helplessness that overcame his muscles. Toothless was the fastest dragon out there, but was speed really a match for so much raw power? He doubted that he even stood a chance against her.

But in truth, if she had devoured him, he would be the same dead as a dragon killed by Vikings. There was really no difference, so he shouldn't be more afraid of her than he was of a Viking.

But Toothless could fight Vikings and win-he was powerful enough to do that. But the Queen...she was unstoppable-her strength unparalleled. If the Vikings chose to kill him, he could do something about it; But if the Queen sentenced him to death, then the verdict would be carried out-simple as that.

There were also other factors, of course. In his experience, the Queen tended to swallow things whole. She wouldn't grant a quick, painless death. No, he suspected she would let them fester for a while, aware that their demise was coming, thus allowing them to suffer for their supposed wrongdoing.

Toothless wondered whether that Gronckle was still slowly digesting in her stomach, conscious and scared. He considered how it must feel to know that your life was ending prematurely, and he decidedly couldn't think of a more unpleasant sensation. It must be so...hopeless. There was nothing it could do to stop its slow descent into oblivion-into the great unknown that came after. death Just the thought was painful to Toothless, so he resolved to stopped thinking about it.

The dragon began flinching at every tree rustle or bird flying overhead, sure that they portended the Queen's arrival. His memories of her had been so twisted by fear that every noise sounded like her growl, and every shadow belonged to her body. Toothless knew that she wouldn't leave the nest. In all her years, she had never done so. But terror had made his imagination run wild with images of horrific, albeit unlikely, attacks.

He hoped he would never have to see her again.

Tired of jumping at every sound, Toothless closed his eyes and tried to focus his attention elsewhere. He could hear the Vikings on the other side of the island-hollering, as usual. It was more interesting to hear them now that he could somewhat understand their language, and he quickly forgot about the Queen with this new distraction. For some reason, Hiccup's name was common in the humans' conversations. He had never actually listened to their discussions before, and he began to wonder if Hiccup was a popular figure among the humans. But if he was, why had Astrid regarded him so rudely? And why did Hiccup spend so much time away from his settlement?

It struck Toothless that he knew almost nothing about his rider's

life outside of the ravine. Did the boy have a family? Did he have other friends? What did he do all day? All of these things were complete mysteries to the dragon.

Most of the Vikings were gathered together, the cheers and laughs evocative of a restive sea. There was one voice that was louder than the rest, though. It was deep and gruff, and Toothless assumed that it belonged to a very large, male Viking. He too was talking about Hiccup, apparently giving some sort of speech that said that he had placed "first" in "dragon training."

What did that mean? Had all the Vikings started befriending dragons like Hiccup had done with Toothless?

The dragon tried to locate the boy's voice amid the chorus of yapping Vikings, but failed to do so. He began to wonder what the child was doing right now, and whether he knew that the people were talking about him.

Soon enough, the Vikings were chanting Hiccup's name. They fell silent quite quickly though, and Toothless was able to catch a phrase from the boy's mouth: "I'm ready." The dragon was curious about what exactly he was "ready" for.

A new sound suddenly presented itself: the screeches of a Monstrous Nightmare as it burst forth from some sort of enclosure. Toothless heard it scurrying around, roaring menacingly at the Vikings surrounding it. He wondered how the Nightmare had arrived there. Very few dragons had the gall to attack the settlement during the daytime. A part of him worried about Hiccup, whom was probably seeing the attack right now.

But he also had faith in his rider. The boy had a way with dragons, and if anyone could convince the Nightmare to back off, Hiccup could.

As if on cue, Toothless could hear him whispering reassuring words to the dragon, and he could discern the sound of the boy dropping something metallic on the ground as he contemptuously added, "I'm not one of them."

The Vikings proceeded to gasp, but Toothless felt a surge of pride. No, Hiccup certainly was not like the other Vikings—at least, not in the way other dragons had come to know them. And he suspected that the Monstrous Nightmare was beginning to realize that, because it abruptly stopped growling.

He heard the deep voice yell, "Stop the fight!" The tone was very commanding, and Toothless soon realized that it belonged to the alpha Viking. No other humans talked that way. This one was the ruler, and he was giving instructions to those who served him. Even Hiccup had a queen, Toothless realized.

But what "fight" were they talking about?

"No!" Hiccup replied defiantly. "I need you all to see this."

Between soft rumblings from the Monstrous Nightmare and concerned mumbles from the Viking population, Toothless could discern the boy's

following words: "They're not what we think they are. We don't have to kill them."

For a moment, Toothless was filled with absurd hope-hope for a strange world where humans had peace with dragons, the war between the species nothing but a memory, and Hiccup and Toothless could ride freely all over the island without the fear of being caught. If the humans saw this...saw Hiccup tame the startled dragon, would they really change their ways? Could they? Toothless wanted them to so badly, and for a second, he thought the hope would come to fruition.

The second soon passed, though. The alpha Viking screamed again, repeating the same phrase and slamming what sounded like a hammer against something metallic.

Then the sound of roaring and igniting fire filled the air, followed by Hiccup's fearful screams. As far as the dragon could tell, something had gone terribly wrong, and now the boy was in danger.

At these troubling noises, Toothless abruptly opened his eyes and pricked up his ears, looking startled. He could hear the Monstrous Nightmare hunting his rider, and Astrid worriedly yelling Hiccup's name.

What had happened? Had the big Viking scared the Monstrous Nightmare into attacking?

Whatever the case, the Nightmare was too far gone. He was going to kill Hiccup if someone didn't do something-fast.

So a very panicked Toothless began climbing the rocky walls of the ravine, knowing that he was unable to fly. However, the walls were very smooth, and every time he would rise a considerable height, he would slide back down. It was maddening! Why couldn't he reach the top just this one time? Just once, he begged himself. Just once. This time he was truly desperate...and desperate creatures can do unexpected things.

Toothless continued struggling to scale the walls, roaring with frustration. He could still hear the Monstrous Nightmare attacking his rider from a distance, and he didn't know how much longer Hiccup could last.

Toothless finally managed to grasp one of the rocks on the side of the gorge, and he mounted it. Then, applying all the energy he could muster, he jumped upwards, using the momentum to scramble up the wall. He finally managed to lift his paw over the side, and he grasped the soil with his claws. A short rush of relief went through his heart, and he was beyond thankful for his luck. But his work was far from done-Hiccup was still in danger.

Throwing all his weight into a thrust, Toothless launched himself out of the ravine, taking off as soon as he touched the ground. He had never ran so fast before-the landscape of the forest looked like a blur of green, but the dragon hardly noticed. He could hear the Monstrous Nightmare attacking Hiccup, and angry adrenaline flooded his veins. His speed increased even more, and Toothless began using short spurts of solo gliding to reach his destination. He was almost there now-Hiccup would just have to hold out a little while

longer.

Toothless tried not to think about what would happen if his rider was killed. He would be alone again-flightless and miserable. But it would be so much worse than his life had been before. Now that he knew what it felt like to have a friend, reverting back to his old ways would be more than just painful-it would be agonizing...unbearable. No, Toothless would not go back. He refused to do so. Hiccup was going to live, even if it meant Toothless was going to die protecting him.

He heard Astrid yell Hiccup's name again, the sound of a clatter, and more yelling and growling on the alpha Viking and Monstrous Nightmare's parts.

Toothless had arrived at the Vikings' village now, weaving between their huts in a panicked sprint, but he had still not reached Hiccup's location. All the humans were gathered in some sort of caged hall.

Given his size, Toothless realized that he couldn't enter through its doors. He looked around, seeking a way to gain access, but he recognized that he was wasting time. The Monstrous Nightmare's roars echoed loudly now, and Toothless could smell its fire.

There was no time. He would have to break into this...Vikings' nest somehow, and he thought he had figured out how. The dragon climbed to the roof of one of the Viking huts, balancing on its triangular roof. Then, he unfurled his enormous bat-wings and proceeded to jump. The wing caught him, and he was temporarily granted the power of gliding.

His flight was more than unstable though, and he suspected that he would fall out of the sky at any moment. As he approached the Vikings' nest, Toothless stiffened all his muscles, hoping to make himself a tougher target for the wind to knock over. He only had to remain airborne for a few seconds longer...he was almost there.

Finally, he was close enough! With a screech, Toothless closed his wings and plummeted toward the caged hall, firing a plasma-blast to clear himself an opening in the metal bars. As the resulting grey smoke filled the air, he could see Hiccup on the ground, trapped in the Monstrous Nightmare's claws.

He heard the humans murmur and scream as he unleashed his full fury on the Monstrous Nightmare, which involved a lot of biting and clawing. In truth, the other dragon was bigger than he was, and probably stronger too. But Toothless was far angrier, and he attacked with unbelievable ferocity. Using his small size as an advantage, he climbed on the Nightmare's back and wrestled it away from the boy. But amidst the other dragon's constant movement, Toothless began to lose his grip, and was flung onto the ground. The other dragon thus attempted to bite his temporarily incapacitated adversary, but Toothless managed to kick its jaws away. Screeching with outrage at the blow, the Nightmare fell to the side and quickly regained its footing.

However, Toothless was on his feet even faster, standing in front of his rider defensively. He roared at everything and everyone, dragon

and human alike, declaring that he would protect Hiccup at all costs-and if anyone meant the boy harm, he or she would have a Night Fury to deal with.

The threat eventually got through to the Monstrous Nightmare, and it retreated. Relief momentarily filled Toothless's heart, and he was glad that the crisis had passed.

But he was wrong. The crisis had not passed.

When Hiccup ran up to Toothless, it was not to thank him as the dragon expected. He pushed him, trying to get Toothless to leave. But he obviously couldn't-not without his rider, anyway.

Soon, Vikings jumped down from the stands, weapons at the ready. They began surrounding him, and Hiccup pushed and pushed for Toothless to leave. But the boy should have realized that the effort was futile unless his rider mounted the dragon.

Toothless spotted the burly, reddish Viking and growled. He was sporting an axe, and he proceeded to charge at the dragon amidst Hiccup's yells of, "No, Dad! Dad, he won't hurt you!"

So this was the "Dad" thing? The Viking alpha? No wonder why Hiccup wasn't inclined to tell him about the nest, especially if he always carried weapons like that.

Toothless was not about to lay down and die, so he ruthlessly lunged at the "Dad," kicking attacking Vikings out of the way as he did so. He made contact with the Viking alpha, pinning him to the ground with his claws.

"Toothless, stop! No!" he heard Hiccup call out, but the dragon wasn't listening. He was determined to eliminate this threat once and for all.

With the "Dad" still under Toothless's weight, the dragon extended his wings threateningly, opening his mouth to roar. He let the gases build at the base of his throat, readying them to ignite. A single plasma blast should effectively dispatch the "Dad," and then the dragon would not have to worry about him anymore.

As he inhaled, Toothless noticed that this Viking's smell was quite pungent, redolent of furs, sweat, fire, fish, metal and...something else. Something very familiar. It took a second for him to place it. For some reason, the alpha Viking smelled vaguely like...Hiccup?

It wasn't the residual smell of past contact-Toothless could identify that quite easily. No, this was different. It was almost like a variation of Hiccup's smell. Or maybe he had the situation reversed. Maybe...maybe the boy's scent was a variation of the alpha Viking's!

"Nooo!" Hiccup wailed as Toothless prepared to deliver the deathblow.

With a jolt, Toothless realized that this "Dad" was Hiccup's parent...his family. The child was the alpha Viking's fledgling, whom Toothless had unknowingly befriended. And if he killed him...Hiccup would be devastated-orphaned, much like Toothless had been.

He finally understood. "Dad" meant father.

He recalled the fates of dragons who had gotten too close to newborn nests, and had thus been scared off by protective parents. He supposed humans weren't much different, and to this Viking, Toothless was a threat to his child. That's why he had attacked Toothless so brutally.

The dragon snapped his mouth shut, swallowing the gases before they could light. No, he could not kill this human-not if he was his rider's parent. He looked back at Hiccup with a surprised expression, wondering how these two very different humans could be remotely related.

But then something hard hit Toothless across the forehead, momentarily stunning him. The Vikings lunged upon him from all sides, ironically pinning him to the ground instead. His head was nearly crushed under the weight of all those heavy humans, and he could hear Hiccup pleading with his kin, asking them not to hurt Toothless. But Astrid was holding him back, and he could not save his dragon.

Now completely at the Vikings' mercy, Toothless looked up at the boy's father and growled. He wouldn't hurt this man...but he could still be angry at him.

One of the humans offered the disgruntled alpha Viking an axe, and though he looked at the dragon with complete disgust, he rejected it. But his voice was full of hate as he gave the following order:

"Put him with the others."

Toothless was then dragged into some sort of cage, away from his rider-possibly for the rest of his life. They handled him roughly, muzzling his mouth and binding his feet so that he could not escape or attack. He was trapped-completely alone and helpless-and he moaned pitifully.

Through the bars, he could still see his rider trying to get to him, but he too was being dragged away by a Viking-in his case, his father. And unfortunately for him, the alpha Viking was much stronger than his son.

Trapped in the dark loneliness of that enclosure and bound by human devices, Toothless soon realized that a Viking could be crueler than any dragon-even the Queen.

## 23. Reflection

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*Despite this chapter being a filler, I really, really love it. I think it's some of my best writing so far, which is actually sort of depressing. We're quickly approaching the end of the story, and it took me 22 chapters to finally write something really good. \*\***

**\*\*In truth, not a lot actually happens in this one-just a lot of**



inner thoughts. But I picked a really nice metaphor for it (in my opinion at least...you'll probably think differently). I also thought that the writing flowed very nicely, but that could just be a delusion on my part. I don't know. I just really, really like this chapter. There's a lot of emotion in it.\*\*

\*\*Plus, I made a funny. Hehe. Horrendous. You'll know when you get there. \*\*

\*\*Please enjoy! And oh god...this story doesn't have much left...I'm probably gonna cry when it's over. I love writing it so much. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>As it turned out, Toothless wouldn't have to wait there for long. The Vikings soon grabbed him again, dragging him out of the caged hall toward the shore. In truth, he was grateful to be outside again. Confinement didn't suit a dragon of his stature, and he breathed in the sea air with eager inhales. But he most certainly was <em>not</em> free...not yet, at least. His mouth was still tightly muzzled with a leather strap, and his wings were bound with something similar.

He fought against his restraints ceaselessly, hoping that the leather would tear with continuous effort. It aggravated the Vikings tasked with transporting him, seeing as it was much harder to move a flailing dragon. Everyone became nervous to get close to his thrashing body, so their progress became very sluggish.

As they continued on, Toothless saw that the Vikings had prepared an entire fleet of ships, all armed to the teeth. Hundreds of humans scrambled about their decks, preparing to cast off. While the dragon stared at the ships hugging the shore, the Vikings managed to pull the dragon onto a dock.

As soon as he arrived, they brought him to a sort of raised platform and tied ropes around his body, probably spoiling any progress that Toothless had made on his other bindings. He never stopped writhing nonetheless, even as they pulled the ropes taut and clasped wooden restraints around his neck and belly. These wooden harnesses were attached with cold metal chains that clanked when he moved.

With all these precautions in place, Toothless knew that there was little hope for escape. But this dragon had survived several falls from the sky, a lost tail-fin, an encounter with the Queen, and a parentless childhood-not necessarily in that order, of course. Every time, he had survived or improved. He was the fastest dragon alive, the first dragon to overcome a disability, the only dragon to survive the queen's death sentence, and quite possibly the last of his kind. Indeed, Toothless was nothing but resilient.

So he growled deep in his throat, hoping to frighten these Vikings the best he could. But even if he had, he was soon lifted away from them-the perception was quite similar to flying, actually, but he knew that was not the case. He couldn't fly constrained like this. And even if his restraints had magically disappeared, he could not maneuver without Hiccup's help.

Whatever it was that gave the false illusion of flight, it proceeded to swing the groaning dragon around unsteadily, eventually dropping him onto a ship at the front of the fleet. He decidedly did not like

the feeling of being lifted like that. Toothless preferred flying under his own control, and the swinging sensation was surely nauseating.

He also disliked boats. They teetered too much for his liking, and wood was oftentimes a fragile material. Toothless knew that boats sunk quite frequently, and he always considered drowning a more painful death than falling from a great height. If this boat went down, he would certainly die without the use of his limbs. The restraints completely prevented him from swimming.

Behind him, Toothless could smell Hiccup's father. The scent was soon accompanied by a booming voice that bellowed, "Set sail! We head for Helheim's gate!"

Toothless didn't know what that was, but he was sure that he wouldn't survive long enough to return.

He could also smell Hiccup somewhere in the distance, but his bindings prevented him from looking in his direction. A part of him hoped that the boy would engineer some daring rescue, and the two would fly off, never having to worry about these brutal Vikings again. But he knew such hopes were in vain. What could the child do against an army of Vikings? Hiccup was just that-a child, and not a particularly strong one at that.

Toothless had brought this mess upon himself by bursting into that caged hall, and now he was paying for it. In truth, it wasn't like Hiccup had asked him to save him. He thus couldn't blame the boy, and he certainly did not regret what had occurred. Hiccup was safe, which was all that really mattered to him. After all, the boy had a family-a whole village of people who would have probably missed him if he had perished. But if Toothless died, as he was sure he would soon...well, no one would miss a lonely dragon. No one except his rider, but he didn't even know that for sure.

Maybe it was better this way. It was obvious that Vikings were incapable of change, and it didn't do the boy any good to be so...different among his own people. Maybe once Toothless was gone, he would have no need to spend time with dragons anymore. Then he would grow up to be a real Viking, with a Viking family, hunting dragons and fishing like all Vikings were supposed to...like his callous father probably wanted him to.

But the thought made Toothless sick to his stomach. He was unable to accept a Hiccup that hated dragons-that hunted them. A part of him hoped that the boy wasn't even capable of such horrendous acts. But for a dragon with a rapidly approaching execution date, the future seemed like a particularly obscure place. He truly didn't know how Hiccup would turn out, and he wished he would have the chance to find out.

The boats began to depart, sailing out into the open sea, thus interrupting Toothless's train of thought. As they moved forward, Hiccup's father walked past the dragon, giving him a harsh glare as he did so. The man apparently hated Toothless with a passion. Maybe he suspected that the dragon had corrupted his child's ways of thinking-that it was Toothless's fault that the boy felt more empathy for dragons than he did for Vikings. Indeed, he blamed the dragon for his own failures as a parent.

Good. Toothless hoped that Hiccup would bring his father problems for years to come, and the dragon returned the glare with equal hatred.

"Bring us home, devil," the burly Viking spat in response, proceeding to stand at the boat's bow, directly in front of Toothless. If his mouth wasn't muzzled, the dragon could have spat a fireball at the man. He would still be trapped, of course, but it would give him a great deal of satisfaction.

But then Toothless remembered that the man was Hiccup's father, and he simply couldn't do something so horrible to the boy's family.

The dragon groaned internally. Why did Hiccup have to be the son of the most ruthless Viking? How could someone like Hiccup even come from such a heartless creature?

The ships were moving quite fast, and soon enough, Hiccup's scent had disappeared on the salty wind. Given Toothless's acute sense of smell, he was able to determine that he was miles from Berk-from his rider. Technically, he wasn't alone; he was surrounded by Viking ships, all of which were hostile toward dragons. In Toothless's mind, nearby enemies-Vikings and the rest of the world included-did not count as company, and without Hiccup, he was as alone as he had been on his first birthday.

But that wasn't really birth, Toothless realized. He hadn't been living at all. In fact, he hadn't felt truly alive until he had found his rider-his best friend, his brother, his family. Living alone isn't living; It's surviving.

His true birthday was not his escape from the egg. No, it was that fateful day months ago, when a tiny Viking boy had shown mercy to a downed dragon, and the dragon had returned the favor. At the time, he hadn't understood what had happened between them-neither of them did. But on that day, they had both recognized a very important thing:

Vikings could feel fear and guilt, and so could dragons.

It was a discovery that no other members of their species had ventured to learn, or maybe just had never cared to, and perhaps that was what made the moment all the more important. The two were pioneers, both willing to see what others would not. And in that moment-in that willingness to see the world differently-they had realized that they essentially shared the same personality, hopes, and dreams...the same soul. They were two halves of a whole whether fate had intended them to be or not.

For Toothless, a glance at Hiccup was like a glance in the pond. He only saw a slightly distorted reflection of himself, the variation caused by forces that he could not control, and perhaps did not want to-like the wind or the water. But despite the differences, he could recognize that the image was his likeness all the same.

Finding Hiccup was like finding his reflection-a provision of undeniable proof that Toothless did exist despite all doubts...that he wasn't just a lonely shadow riding on the winds, born as the ghost

of a dead breed. Because if no one knows you, if know one cares about you, do you truly exist in the sense of being alive? Or are you just a phantom of something with the potential to live?

But now, as they sailed onwards unimpeded, he knew his rider was getting farther away, completely unreachable and becoming more so. And even if Toothless was still on Berk, he knew that the boy's father would never let Hiccup near dragons again. They would be separated anyway, and Toothless would still be alone. His situation was hopeless.

Without Hiccup, the dragon was already dead. He just had yet to produce his own corpse.

## 24. A Losing Battle

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*Despite the emotional ramblings for the first 6 paragraphs or so, I think this chapter is my new favorite (I know, I know. I just told you that the last one was my favorite. But I think I managed to top that one.)\*\***

**\*\*As far as I can tell, this is my best descriptive writing ever. I think it flows quite nicely too, so needless to say I'm very proud of it. Plus-there's so much suspense in it!\*\***

**\*\*And if you guys care for a personal story, I always listen to music while writing. So while I was making these dark scenes, I was shuffling through my music, and some High School Musical came on (Bop to the Top, namely). Yeah, that is NOT good music for suspense. I think I might have screamed "Are you kidding me?" out loud before skipping it. But if you'd just imagine that as the soundtrack to the chapter, I'm sure it won't seem so depressing. \*\***

**\*\*So close to the end now! Gah. I can feel the tears coming already. I mean, I poured my heart and soul into this story, and I'm not ready for it to end. \*\***

**\*\*Serves me right for writing so often. \*\***

**\*\*Well, I hereby present this action-packed (first 6 paragraphs excluded, of course) portion of the story. Enjoy! \*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>A part of Toothless felt somewhat bad for the humans. After all, it must have been awful to take these rickety sea vessels everywhere, all the time. Flying was definitely a more pleasurable experience, and probably safer too. The only obstacles Toothless had ever found in the sky were birds, other dragons, or the occasional mountain-all of which could be easily avoided. But deadly rocks and sea stacks peppered these waters, spelling doom for any unsuspecting sailor. Sometimes they were invisible as they scraped the boat from underneath, probably tearing holes into the one thing separating him from the bottom of the ocean.<p>

As such things crossed his mind, Toothless couldn't help but feel miserable. The recognition of his own emotional and (albeit upcoming) physical demise provided the dragon with enough anguish, but the unsteady rocking of the boat only worsened matters. He hated the way the vessel moved-the way the ocean made it move. The sensation reminded him of an earthquake...of constantly shifting ground that threatened to split open and pull him under. Under usual circumstances, such things would have never worried a dragon. Toothless would have just departed by air. But with his body completely restrained and his rider far away, the flightless dragon was at the complete mercy of the volatile seas-even more so than the humans.

Sickened by the rocking sensation, Toothless angled his head downwards, focusing on the wooden boards below him with forced attention. He also tried to concentrate on the lingering, appetizing smell of fish that indicated past fishing trips-before the ship had become a vessel of war.

Toothless desperately to wanted go back to Berk-back to his rider and the ravine. Because that's what the island was to him now-his home. And these Vikings...these ignorant, savage, pig-headed Vikings had practically kidnapped him from that home, and were going to kill him too. Who gave man the authority to kill things simply because their existence was undesirable? They may be human-they may be clever with their dexterous hands, sharp weapons, and fancy words-but that certainly did not make them superior enough to sentence anything to death. Hiccup knew that...Hiccup had known that all along.

And it wasn't just the fact that they were humans. Dragons were the same-they didn't have to kill anything they didn't eat...they didn't have the right to! The only thing that really stood between the two species and peace was their inability to change. They just couldn't stop killing...couldn't stop "defending" themselves in the hopes that they would decimate the enemy enough to be left in peace.

But in reality, peace was much more attainable. One discarded knife, or a jaw of retracted teeth, could achieve it just as easily.

The burly Viking-Hiccup's father-began yelling again. He told the other ships to "sound [their] positions." Toothless had never heard "sound" as a verb before, and it confused him a bit, but he assumed that the order was meant to help the fleet navigate through the dense fog curling around the boats.

Another Viking approached the "Dad", beginning to converse with him nervously. This human was perhaps slightly smaller, but burly all the same. His face was a bit misshapen too, with long yellow hair hanging off his lips. But what caught the majority of the dragon's attention was the man's missing leg and hand, which had both been replaced with strange contraptions. Their craftsmanship was a bit similar to Hiccup's, and Toothless wondered whether the boy had learned his skills from this stranger.

But at the thought of his rider, the dragon began feeling especially hollow inside, so he kept his thoughts on their conversation. He heard the blonde Viking call Hiccup's father something like "Stoick," which apparently meant that "Dad" wasn't his name. They were both stupid names anyway, in Toothless's opinion. Stupid names befitting

of a stupid man.

With a jolt, Toothless realized where they were heading. He could sense it-the almost magnetic pull that urged him toward a far-off destination. For some reason, the boats were bringing him to the dragon's nest. It was almost like the Vikings had known about his fear of the Queen, and wanted him to die terrified. But how had they found out?

A small, devilish part of him suggested that Hiccup had notified them, but Toothless immediately rejected it. He knew his rider would never do such a thing. Their choice of an execution venue was probably a coincidence.

His instincts made his body respond to the pull, but his reactions were different this time. Instead of being innately drawn to the nest, a mixture of apprehension and confinement had kept his senses and survival instincts sharp, and his head shot up to stare anxiously in the nest's direction. He knew that was where his greatest fear sat waiting to devour him, and if the Queen happened to jump out to kill him, he wanted to see it coming.

He barely noticed Stoick walking past him to the helm of the boat, or the ship's turns, which suddenly seemed to mimic the movements of the dragon's head. Right now, nothing mattered but watching out for the Queen, whom Toothless was sure still had a vendetta against him.

Toothless could hear the Vikings whispering fearfully, probably in anticipation of their destination. They should be fearful...even if they were unaware of what really awaited them on the island. The entire fleet was doomed-no matter how many weapons or soldiers they had brought. If their intention wasn't to kill Toothless in the cruelest possible way, then he assumed that they wanted to take the nest. And given the Queen's immense power, the dragon knew that they had already lost that battle...even before it had begun.

Finally, the shore was directly in front of them, and Toothless's transfixed stare was replaced with more thrashing. He was now desperate to escape. The Queen could probably smell him already, probably wondering how he could be so arrogant and stupid to return after his past defiance. She definitely would not show him any leniency for being forced here against his will. In fact, she would probably only become more enraged. He had brought the Viking fleet onto her territory, after all.

Toothless could hear the sound of hundreds of chattering dragons, all contained inside the mountain. But that's not what he was afraid of. No, the thing he feared never "chattered".

She thundered.

Stoick walked past the flailing dragon, taking a moment to stare at the nest with a sort of relief. He then flung himself out of the boat, smashing his hand on the ground as he landed.

The noises stopped abruptly, and the air filled with the loudest silence that Toothless had ever heard. It was the sound of something listening closely...watching and waiting to attack the unwelcome intruders. He could actually feel the force in which the creatures

strained their ears, scoping out this new enemy with mounting fear.

He knew that quiet dragons were defensive dragons...and defensive dragons were always dangerous.

Leaving Toothless onboard, all the Vikings left their ships, marching onto the rocky shore—a shore that was not meant to hold human feet. They held many weapons in their hands or on their bodies, and their muscles were aptly tense in case of a sudden attack. But Toothless knew that such devices and behaviors would not help them. They were all going to die—every last one of them.

A soft pang of sadness pestered Toothless as he realized that Hiccup was going to be orphaned. He personally knew how that felt, and wished that things had worked out differently.

He continued watching the ill-fated men and women from the boat. Seeking instructions, the humans gathered around their leader with nervous expressions. Stoick was drawing pictures in the gravel, and the Vikings watched his work closely. The drawings weren't very good, Toothless observed. He wondered why the people were so intrigued by them.

Unexpectedly, a series of images quickly flashed through Toothless's mind: a setting sun...a boy trailing a stick in the sand...a sketch of a dragon...a jungle of lines...and a hand reaching out for him—|

The dragon moaned quietly, wishing he could go back to that day and relive every moment of his friendship with Hiccup. The memory had felt like a warm breeze—pleasant, but utterly untouchable and temporary. It did not belong in this nightmare...a nightmare that was momentarily quiet, but would soon be filled with screams and flames.

The Vikings couldn't foresee that terrible, imminent future. If humans lacked anything, it was good instincts.

Stoick—who was probably the most foolhardy of them all—fearlessly moved toward the mountain, raising his hand in the air. He soon clenched it into a fist, and suddenly, rocks were firing from enormous devices mounted on the ships. They hit the mountainside with deafening impacts, forcefully breaking through slabs of stone. After a few minutes, they had ripped through the rocky walls, leaving a jagged crack at the mountain's base.

Hiccup's father walked toward it, his silhouette too pale against the inscrutable darkness of the nest's interior. A boat fired, and another round rock was fired at the crack, except this time, it was ablaze. As it sailed into the heart of the mountain, the fire briefly illuminated its contents, shimmering quickly over the scales of a writhing, screeching dragon army.

With a great bellow, Stoick charged into the nest, his hammer raised aggressively. The dragons felt threatened, of course, and they flew away, pouring out of the crack like blood from an open wound. The Vikings swung their weapons tenaciously at the ascending horde, but failed to make contact at creatures trying to get away so frantically. Toothless watched their escape, moaning with a sort of

wistful envy. He wished he could leave too. The dragons knew what was coming...knew that all Hel was about to break loose. The Queen was definitely not going to take kindly to this violent intrusion, and the dragons wanted to be far away when she unleashed her enormous wrath.

Soon enough, the nest was empty of all its inhabitants...all except one.

The crushing silence resumed, this time even more disconcerting. There was immense anger in this quietness, like the ominous calm before a devastating typhoon.

Believing that they had defeated their enemy anyway, the Vikings cheered, raising their weapons in celebration.

A growl echoed beneath their festivities, reverberating through the ground like it came from the earth itself. Toothless knew about the darkness bubbled right beneath their feet, but they didn't know...they didn't knowâ€|

Unsure of what else to do, he struggled a bit more against his restraints, moaning nervously. She was coming now...there was no stopping it...no turning backâ€|

He knew his efforts were fruitless. The bindings would not budge. Confined like this, he was a sitting duck, placed on a platter for the Queen like some sort of commemorative meal. He had never felt terror like this-probably because he had never experienced secondhand anger \_anything\_ like this. It was a palpable, growing force-like lava relentlessly pushing its way out of the Earth's core to destroy everything in its path.

From a distance, Stoick had apparently seen Toothless's distress, because he screamed for the cheering to stop.

"This isn't over! Form your ranks! Hold together! " he yelled sternly. Toothless wondered whether there was really a point in regrouping now. Might as well give the Vikings a final few moments of joy before the Queen emerged.

Almost as if the thought had warranted her presence, a tremendous roar tore through the air, forceful enough to overpower a hurricane's winds. Toothless watched as the mountain began to collapse, and the Vikings-finally realizing what they had gotten themselves into-ran away with screams of fear.

With a mighty crash, the prodigious Queen burst through the walls of rock, using the pure firmness of her own skull as a bludgeon. Every inch of her being, from her oversized jaws and teeth to her mace of a tail, screamed "dangerous". Her scales were a greenish-blue, flecked with jagged red lumps that gave her an appearance as rocky as her territory. And like the monarch that she was, a sort of organic crown extended from her forehead, eventually thinning into spikes that lined her spine.

Toothless also got the unsettling feeling that she noticed \_everything\_. Her enormous nostrils and multitude of eyes suggested as much. Sure that she had spotted him, he proceeded to cower in his restraints, disconsolate about the hand that fate had dealt him.



She reared up, releasing another shocking roar-a roar that probably made the sun want to hide under the covers of night-and then fell back to the ground with a terrible impact. Toothless knew that she had more pressing targets than the sun, anyway.

The Vikings fired their useless rocks at the Queen, but they were nothing but irksome pebbles to her, and she proceeded to smash the firing devices ferociously.

Knowing that they were outmatched, the humans ran back to their ships, probably hoping to cast off and leave this place forever. Toothless hoped they would too-he was desperate to leave the nest and this raging Queen on their boats.

But she was not foolish enough to let her prey escape so easily. The Queen widened her jaws, and Toothless could actually smell the gases in her throat the moment before they lit. The fire erupted from her mouth like a tidal wave of solid flame, setting every boat ablaze-including the one Toothless was on.

He was momentarily relieved at the fact that he was still alive. Luckily, the fire had not been hot enough to hurt a dragon, whose scales were almost completely fireproof. However, it was scorching enough to completely decimate his ship. He knew that it would collapse soon, its contents sinking to the bottom-Toothless being one of them. He screeched at this realization, knowing that a physical death was truly imminent now. No one was coming to save him, and he was not strong enough to save himself.

Toothless could hear the Queen stomping around the island, scattering the Viking forces. But his attention was more focused on the hungry flames that surrounded him, devouring the remains of the wooden boat that acted as his only protection. He gave a few more half-hearted pulls against his restraints, but he knew the effort was useless.

This was it...this was the end. He had come into this world in flames, flightless and alone, and he was leaving it the same way.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Sorry for the cliffhanger! But we all know what's gonna happen, right? <strong>

## 25. Liberation

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*Man, this chapter is longer than I wanted it to be. The next chapter was supposed to be part of this chapter, but obviously that didn't happen. \*\***

**\*\*Yeah...I'm not so sure about the writing in this one. With all the nameless dragons and nameless riders (to Toothless anyway) things can get a bit confusing. Plus, something about this chapter just didn't seem to flow as well as the last one. Sorry about that.\*\***

\*\*And hey again Eva. I wish I could respond via pm, but you're a guest so...anyway, thanks for the critiques! One was just a typo, which will be corrected ASAP. But I thought that Toothless's conclusion was sound. He heard Astrid and Hiccup (after their own surprise about the queen) arguing about telling Stoick a few chapters ago, and I imply that Toothless is intelligent enough to make conclusions. Also, Toothless was a bit frantic at the time, so his mind is purposely jumping from conclusion to conclusion. He doesn't dismiss the idea that he will be killed, but he is trying to make sense of his odd surroundings. And he recognizes the meaning of "dad" but it's still a foreign word to him, and he applies some of Hiccup's mannerisms to his own thoughts. But I'll definitely make things more clear next time. Thanks for telling me! :) oh and hel is the Norse form of hell, by the way!\*\*

\*\*As always, I hope you all enjoy this chapter , though! \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>An explosion rocked the sky, momentarily shaking Toothless out of his despair. His head turned back to the Queen's rampage, and he was stunned by what he saw.<p>

Smoke was curling from her skull, evidence of a recent fireball impact. He was briefly left wondering who had launched it, but the question was soon answered. A group of dragons flew into view, buzzing around the Queen like bees. But there was a voice coming from the dragons...a human voice...a voice that sounded like...Hiccup?

It was Hiccup! At the sight of his rider, Toothless stopped paying attention to the devilish flames that were demolishing his boat. Hiccup had come back for him after all...He was here to rescue Toothless! Gratitude became like a hot coal in Toothless's stomach, burning warmer than he had ever felt before.

As he watched, he noticed that Hiccup was riding a different dragon-a Deadly Nadder by its appearance. The boy looked extremely focused as he looked behind him, his brown hair blowing blowing in the wind. He was talking to the other dragons-but that didn't make sense. Dragons didn't just automatically know the Viking language. How could they understand?

It took a second for Toothless to realize that all the dragons had riders-teenagers, just like Hiccup.

The boy was yelling orders to the other riders, all of whom didn't seem very acclimated to their dragons. They teetered a dangerously on the creatures' backs, but whatever training they had received was ultimately sufficient. The children were able to yell with joy and pride as they managed to bank and soar, turning back toward the Queen to attack.

Toothless wished he could join them.

He also couldn't believe that Hiccup had actually taught other Vikings to ride dragons. The idea had seemed so impossible, especially after his recent encounter with the boy's stubborn people. But somehow...somehow Hiccup had convinced the dragons to trust the humans, and the humans to trust the dragons. It was absolutely

amazing!

A moment later, Toothless also saw Stoick's expression as he watched the Viking children fly, and it became an even more amazing moment. Hiccup's father was absolutely stunned, almost like he had been hit across the forehead with a human weapon. But Toothless wasn't sure if the man was angry-the surprise had apparently overcome all other visible emotions.

The dragons broke formation to attack the Queen from different angles. A pair of skinny children on a Zippleback flew around her head, screaming what sounded like insults. In response, she released a tongue of flame, but the dragon managed to maneuver safely out of the way. Another, more robust boy hovered on a Gronkle by the Queen's ear, clanging a hammer against a shield. He probably intended the loud sounds to disrupt her concentration, and her confused expression indicated that the plan was working. However, the noise would also hurt the dragon he rode, so the distraction would probably not last for long.

Even the Monstrous Nightmare that Toothless had fought was there, working with a burly boy that urged it to claw the Queen's face.

Meanwhile, Hiccup flew the Nadder toward Toothless's location on the sinking boat. He fearlessly jumped off of the other dragon's back, landing nimbly on the only part of the deck that was not completely consumed by the massive conflagration.

"Go help the others!" he yelled to Astrid, whom was still on the back of the Nadder. She nodded briefly before flying toward the Queen to aid in the fight.

The joy of Hiccup's arrival abruptly ended as Toothless looked at his rider, immediately coming to his senses. He had just jumped onto a burning boat, and the boy was not fireproof. If Hiccup failed to remove his bindings, they would both die, and Toothless's capture would have been for nothing! He wasn't sure if that was a risk worth taking, and he really didn't have time to decide.

So he looked at the boy pleadingly, a part of him urging Hiccup to leave, and the other part hoping desperately to be freed, obviously despite his better judgement. His rider apparently only noticed the latter part, however, and he began pulling off Toothless's restraints.

"Okay, hold on. Hold on," Hiccup mumbled as he pulled the leather muzzle off of Toothless's head. He then grabbed a nearby wood splinter and shoved it between the chains, hoping to pull the metal apart with applied force.

Toothless could hear the fight continuing in the distance, but he wasn't focusing on that. Every ounce of his being went into his constant hopes for escape-hopes that the boy's strength would somehow break the bindings.

Unfortunately, little progress was being made. Now that he was here, Toothless knew that Hiccup wouldn't leave, even if the situation was hopeless. The boy would go down with his best friend.

The trained dragons must have provoked even more of the Queen's violence , because she stomped toward the ships, her mace-like tail swinging recklessly. It smashed into the adjacent ship , knocking its mast toward the two friends' boat. It fell toward Hiccup with a defeated creak, but luckily, the boy managed to jump out of the way at the right moment.

Sadly, their troubles were not over yet. The Queen was too close to them, and she raised her foot above the boat, casting a very dark, large shadow on the two friends. It hovered there for a moment, almost like she was taking satisfaction in this particular footfall, and then let it drop. The heavy paw splintered the fragile wood, easily breaking the boat in two and submerging it.

Toothless was suddenly trapped in a world of bitter cold and peculiar darkness. He could see mutating orange light in the distance, and debris floating down beside him-but he was sinking far quicker than anything else in the water. It occurred to him that he was drowning-just like he had expected to. These ruthless chains were dragging him to the sea floor, hoping to give him a death filled with painful pressure and exploding lungs. Panicked, he roared, but the sound was muffled by the water, and he only succeeded in wasting the little air he had left to breathe.

So the Queen had managed to kill him after all.

But Hiccup still swam down toward the dragon, determined to free his best friend. It was a useless effort, though. Toothless knew that the chances of breaking the restraints were even less underwater, and he wished his friend would surface-would live to see another day. He shook his head at his rider, hoping to express that it was too late for him-that Hiccup must leave. But his rider seemed to be stubbornly set on dying today, because he refused to abandon Toothless as he continued to descend.

The boy pulled wildly at the chains, but as Toothless expected, they remained firmly attached. Hiccup's lungs were smaller than the dragons, and he was running out of air even faster. His efforts soon stopped completely as he slipped into unconsciousness, and Toothless watched with horror as his motionless rider floated in front of him, apparently suffocated.

With both dragon and rider immobile, the water was a horribly quiet and depressing place, especially given the circumstances of that immobilization. The dragon had never felt so guilty before. Hiccup was dying-dead-and it was all his fault. His rider looked so frail floating there like that...he was just a child...he didn't deserve to die this way

The dragon waited for death, wishing to join his rider in the next life.

All of a sudden, an unknown force yanked the boy away, quickly speeding him toward the surface. At the sight, hope replaced Toothless's guilt, and optimistic thoughts filled his head. Maybe Hiccup was alive after all, and he had swam to the surface!

The dragon felt no sense of betrayal at his own abandonment. There was only relief, and he encouraged the departure with a garbled roar.

He was alone now. That was okay. That was how it was supposed to be, and he closed his eyes.

As he sat quietly in the water, he felt something rush at him. Toothless opened his eyes to see Stoick swimming in front of him, his expression fierce-though the target of that fierceness was inscrutable. Apparently, Hiccup had not left on his own. He had been pulled away-saved by his father. That was one of the only things these two very different creatures had in common-their protectiveness of Hiccup.

They stared at one another intensely for a moment, and Toothless began to suspect that Stoick was there to kill him. There wasn't much sense in it, especially since the dragon was about to run out of air anyway. But revenge often drove humans and dragons to do incredibly stupid and unnecessary things, and Toothless \_had\_ caused Hiccup's near-suffocation. The idea that Stoick wanted to kill Toothless himself made \_some\_ sense.

Now Stoick's hands went for the dragon's throat. That was even more ridiculous. Suffocating a dragon that was already suffocating? What satisfaction could he gain from that?

But the hands never touched Toothless's neck. They grasped the wooden harnesses, and using unbelievable strength, Stoick pulled them apart at the hinges. The restraints floated innocently to the sides, almost like they were ordinary debris. But Toothless knew better. He knew how murderous those wooden contraptions were-how durable. But not durable enough for this Viking...a Viking that Toothless now couldn't help seeing as brave.

The two briefly exchanged glances before the dragon shot upwards toward the surface, using his feet to take Stoick with him. Seeing as Hiccup's father had used the majority of his strength dismantling those restraints, Toothless wanted to return the favor. He used his mighty wings as added propulsion to lift the heavy Viking, desperate to reach the precious air-air that was so close now. With a forceful splash, they broke through to the surface. Toothless remained airborne long enough to drop the soaked Stoick onto the shore, where he sat panting for a few moments.

The dragon, meanwhile, landed on a rock overlooking the Queen's nearby rampage. Hatred coursed through his veins as he looked at her. She had tried to kill him and his rider twice now without a second thought-without any remorse.

He thought back to Hiccup's father-a man that he had once thought of as heartless. But he had a new perspective now...a perspective that allowed him to remember Stoick rejecting the axe that the Viking had offered him. On that day, Toothless and Stoick both had the chance to kill one another...but they had chosen not to. The latter knew that Toothless had spared him-spared him despite the belligerence that he had shown. The refusal to fight was uncommon, but Stoick was apparently a moral man. He would not kill something that refused to kill him.

Stoick had probably thought that the mercy had been a fluke, which is why he proceeded to attack the dragon nest. But after he had seen the children riding those dragons...easily trusting their lives to their

supposed enemies...well, even the most stubborn views can be altered.

The emergence of the Queen, the bond between Vikings and dragons, and his son's protectiveness of Toothless had convinced him that the feud could end. And that was why he had saved Toothless. It appeared that Vikings could change, after all.

They had a common enemy now: the Queen. All the death, destruction, and hatred-it was her fault. She alone had started the war, not the dragons and Vikings that had actually fought it. The feud had begun with her greedy hunger, which caused her subordinate dragons to steal for her. And of course, the Vikings were protective of their food and had fought back with a vengeance. Thus, the terrified dragons were then forced to seek protection from her...to serve the very creature that had instigated the violence. And she felt no guilt about all that bloodshed. Nothing mattered to her except her next meal.

The Queen was a monster-willing to kill dragon and human alike to get what she wanted. She didn't deserve the power that she had.

Toothless motioned and roared for Hiccup to join him, eager to take flight and join the fight. The Queen had failed to kill him and his rider twice now, and the friends would make her pay dearly for that mistake. His close encounter with death had replaced his fear with anger and determination.

"You got it, bud," Hiccup agreed with a nod, probably feeling the same way. As the queen roared in the distance, he climbed onto Toothless's back and prepared to take off. But Stoick was suddenly next to them, holding Hiccup's arm. The dragon momentarily worried that he wouldn't let his rider go, but that theory was soon proven wrong.

"I'm sorry," Stoick apologized, "for...for everything."

Hiccup returned the apology before Stoick added quickly, "You don't have to go up there."

His rider's next sentence used a few words that were too complex for Toothless, and he could only pick out "We're Vikings." But he assumed that the phrase had greater meaning for the father and son, so he didn't worry about it too much.

After placing his hand over his son's, Stoick said one last thing: "I'm proud to call you my son."

Toothless never had parents-not ones that he knew, anyway. They hadn't bothered to stick around. At the sound of Hiccup and Stoick's conversation-a conversation that betrayed so much love and worry-the dragon could not help but feel a bit wistful. If his father had seen Toothless now, would he have been proud? Would he have been worried? He would never know.

Then Stoick released Hiccup's hand, and his rider turned frontwards. Seeing that Hiccup was ready, Toothless extended his wings, and with a mighty flap, they took off directly into a vertical climb. The dragon had missed his own speed, his freedom of flight, and his rider. He was worth nothing without them.

Whether they were enough to defeat the Queen, he supposed he would find out.

## 26. As One

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*I suppose it's fitting that this is the longest chapter. Don't worry, I didn't break the fight into parts. This chapter is continuous action, so the writing may be a bit choppy. But I thought it came out okay. (And Eva, I didn't include that detail because it doesn't fit with continuity. There are many times that Toothless uses fire after he swims in RoB and DoB. I don't think it applies to him like it does other dragons. In the movie, it looked like they were just getting enough speed from a drop to zip past the Queen. They really didn't wait very long. Plus, I like to reserve the right to do things a bit differently.) \*\***

**\*\*Also, we all need to have a serious talk about this chapter. So please read this before you flood my story with angry reviews, okay? \*\***

**\*\*There are a lot of theories about how Hiccup actually lost his leg. Since Toothless was the one that saved him, he knows how it happened. \*\***

**\*\*Both Hiccup and Toothless were falling toward the ground head-first. That much you can tell just from looking. Now, Toothless has to somehow catch Hiccup, swing him toward his stomach, and envelope him in his wings to protect him from the flames. There are only two ways that he could achieve that before Hiccup died: he A. grabbed Hiccup with his feet or B. grabbed Hiccup with his mouth, and by extension, his teeth. \*\***

**\*\*Now, the former doesn't make too much sense to me, despite it being nicer to think about. They were falling headfirst, remember-practically on top of each other. Toothless's face was very close to Hiccup's leg, and it would have wasted time for him to angle himself so he could catch Hiccup with his feet. Chances are, he would have crashed into Hiccup just trying to do that, thus pushing him farther away-as was shown when Hiccup was hit with Toothless's tail prosthetic earlier in the movie. \*\*\*\*So that leaves the second option. It sounds horrible, but it would make sense for Toothless to grab Hiccup's leg with his mouth. He could do it quickly, and it would only take a shift of his neck to swing Hiccup to safety. Plus, it would completely explain how Hiccup lost his lower leg. Toothless's teeth were not retracted in that moment, and the force of his bite was probably pretty strong-perhaps not enough to sever a leg, per se, but enough to mangle it beyond repair. \*\***

**\*\*Toothless did not sustain any catastrophic injuries, so the landing itself did not ruin Hiccup's leg. Toothless was even the one who took the brunt of the fall. And the fire was closer to Hiccup's upper body than his lower, so it wasn't burned off. Besides, how would only one leg burn if the other was intact? \*\***

\*\*Maybe you disagree, and that's fine, but this is the theory that makes sense to me, and therefore the one I used. To me, Toothless saved Hiccup by biting his leg and pulling him to safety. You can even \_see\_ that the left leg was a bit higher than the right while he fell, which would make it an easy target for Toothless. I mean, in HTTYD 2, Hiccup even implies that losing the leg was not exactly an accident-that Toothless didn't save it on purpose. So I'm gonna assume that's what happened. I'm \_definitely\_ not saying Toothless wanted Hiccup to lose it, but it was a sacrifice he would make to save his friend. \*\*

\*\*But I don't talk about blood-just a mention of the leg being badly damaged, so if that's what you're worried about, calm down!  
:)\*\*

\*\*But please don't yell at me about what I chose to do. As a writer, I did what made the most sense to me. I'd like to think that Toothless wasn't the one that directly ruined the leg, but logic seems to suggest otherwise. And (I think) I'm a pretty logical person. \*\*

\*\*Despite all that, please enjoy the chapter! It's got lots of action, which I'm sure a lot of you will enjoy. \*\*

\* \* \*

><p>The additional riders' efforts had obviously deteriorated as the fight continued. The remaining dragons were circling the Queen aimlessly, which really only succeeded in irritating her further. Meanwhile, the burly boy was hanging from her crown-probably having been dropped there by his reckless dragon. The robust one was on the ground too, crushed by his Gronckle, and unable to provide any more aid. That left the two identical children and Astrid, and from what Toothless could see, they weren't making any progress. If Toothless and Hiccup had waited any longer, the others probably would have been doomed.<p>

"He's up!" he heard Astrid yell, flying toward her fellow teenagers. Like Hiccup had done before, she gave orders to the pair on the Zippleback, and within a few seconds, they had rescued the burly boy on the Queen's crown.

But as Astrid followed the Zippleback, the Queen opened her enormous maw, using her powerful lungs to suck the girl and her dragon toward her. The Nadder struggled against the relentless pull, but it could not fight such a strong vacuum. They began to fall into the Queen's mouth.

Seeing this, Hiccup and Toothless immediately went into action. His rider showed no surprise when the dragon closed his wings, dive-bombing toward the Queen at incredible speeds. It was almost as if he had expected that move-and he probably had.

Toothless hadn't flown this fast since that attack on Berk, those many months ago, before his whole world had changed. Before Hiccup had changed it. He had been a different dragon then-he had hated Vikings. The world had been a cold, cruel place that only meant him harm. But now...now he had a life worth fighting for.

His wings made an odd screeching sound as he zipped downwards, which



notified the scattered Vikings of his arrival. They all screamed, "Night Fury! Get down!" unaware that Toothless was there to help them. But he supposed they would find out soon enough, and maybe...just maybe...their gratitude could overcome their fear. It had for Toothless, anyway.

He passed the Queen like a bolt of lightning, firing a blue-hot plasma blast directly into her mouth, which stopped the vacuum she had created.

But the explosion also knocked Astrid and her dragon out of the air, and they fell to the ground quite separately. The Nadder managed to catch itself with its wings, but Astrid was still falling.

Now it was Hiccup's turn. He maneuvered Toothless into a midair turn, which allowed him to head back for the rapidly following Viking girl. The dragon was far faster than gravity, and he sped forward to catch her with his feet. She was soon under him, and the rest of the rescue would be performed without sight. He reached out his leg, hoping that he had calculated his moves correctly.

It appeared that he had, because he felt his paw enclose one of her ankles, and the three were soon zooming over the water-he had saved her, after all.

He felt Hiccup looking frantically to the sides, wondering whether Toothless had actually made the catch. "Did you get her?" he asked the dragon worriedly.

Toothless believed so, but he couldn't be entirely sure. So he looked under his own belly, hoping that Hiccup would understand what he was doing. Luckily, Astrid's foot was still held tightly in his paw as they flew over the ocean, and she smiled up at him gratefully. Toothless returned the expression with his gummy mouth and moaned happily, which notified Hiccup that she was safe. The dragon also observed that Astrid was yet another fearless flier, which probably made her a good match for Hiccup. He had no problem with that now-he was starting to like the girl a lot.

As they turned again, heading back for the Queen, Toothless used his other leg to bring Astrid upright. He then proceeded to drop her onto a nearby hill, which left her safely out of harm's way. That was probably Hiccup's intention, anyway.

Wasting no time, Toothless and Hiccup shot back toward the roaring Queen, whom was recovering from the fireball shot into her mouth. It was up to them to defeat her now-they were the only ones that stood a chance.

"Go," he heard Astrid breathe as they departed. Yes, he was definitely beginning to like that girl. In truth, she was a bit hot-headed, but her faith in herself and other people made up for that trait.

Meanwhile, Hiccup had been scrutinizing the Queen, probably hatching a plan. "That thing has wings," he said finally. "Okay! Let's see if it can use them!"

Immediately seeing what his rider meant, Toothless stopped flapping, leaving his wings extended in the air, and the wind pushed against

them. Hiccup moved the tail prosthetic, which allowed the force of the gust to push them around. This allowed them to turn without using any precious effort-effort that would need to go into their next moves.

With a screech, Toothless flapped his wings once more, pushing as much strength as he could muster into the movement. The exertion shot him forward like a slingshot, and he closed them so they would not slow his drop. At speeds like this, he appeared to be a dark shooting star-moving so fast that their very image blurred. It was not normal for living things to move this quickly, and the air resistance threatened to pull their bodies apart. But they ignored such perils in the face of the one they were rapidly approaching-in truth, they had never felt so alive.

Toothless gathered an enormity of gases in his throat. He knew his fireballs were hotter, perhaps more concentrated than other dragons'. Whether they were strong enough to hurt the Queen, he didn't know-but he could hope.

He lit the gases, launching them at her gigantic side. With a massive roar, she fell over, apparently knocked over by the strength of the fireball. Toothless could not help but feel proud of himself-\_he\_ had done that! He had knocked over the queen!

But Hiccup was the one keeping a level head, and it was his navigating alone that allowed them to fly out of the way, worried that the Queen would recover. Their speed was unstoppable though, and they were nearly a mile away before they had time to look back to see her reaction.

"Do you think that did it?" Hiccup asked, turning around.

It had, apparently, because he gave a little gasp. Two mighty wings had unfolded from her back, and they began flapping with the force of the world's strongest typhoon. It seemed impossible, but the gigantic beast had soon raised itself into the air, its weight supported by only its incredible strength.

She followed after Hiccup and Toothless, roaring indignantly. The friends were swift-quicker than any other \_normal-sized\_ dragon. But her size and power allowed her to cover more ground, and she was gaining on them-fast.

"Well...he can fly," Hiccup observed wryly, and Toothless mentally corrected the boy's incorrect guess at her gender. But such things were really not important at the moment. If they kept flying like this, the Queen was surely going to catch them and devour them.

But the sky was Toothless's domain-perhaps more than any other dragon's. In his opinion, he knew how to work the air better than anyone, and by the end of today, the Queen was going to regret ever leaving the safety of the ground. \_He\_ was the queen up here!

Or king...whatever.

With Hiccup in control of his tail, Toothless was able to dive between sea stacks, reminiscent of a fish swimming fluidly through the water. The Queen was far less graceful, however, and she was unable to navigate so swiftly. Her head painfully plowed through

sea-stack after sea-stack, but the collisions failed to dissuade her from her targets. She was still chasing Hiccup and Toothless with a vengeance.

As they continued flying, Toothless could see a crowd of Vikings out of the corner of his eye, watching them anxiously. Some were cheering, though, and that was encouraging. He hoped he wouldn't let them down...let Hiccup downâ€¦|

When the two friends spotted a dark cloud above them, Hiccup vocalized Toothless's thoughts. "Okay, Toothless. Time to disappear."

With Hiccup adjusting the tail prosthetic's position yet again, Toothless began climbing steadily into the sky. He flapped frantically, trying to get enough momentum to outrun the Queen and hide. But a smell interrupted his efforts-gas, building in her throat and ready to fire.

His rider's tense body language indicated that he had noticed the same thing. "Here it comes!" he yelled, using the artificial tail-fin to maneuver his dragon out of the way.

A wall of fire shot out of the Queen's mouth, eventually dissolving into a mass of jet black smoke, and that mass obscured her vision for a short time. It provided a brief distraction-one long enough for Toothless to gain some distance and tilt himself into another vertical climb. Once the Queen saw this, she imitated them. But she was slower at this angle, her flight requiring more effort to lift her gigantic body weight directly upwards. Toothless felt her jaws snap behind him, angrily trying to catch them. But she soon lost track of them, the mixture of clouds and smoke camouflaging Toothless's body.

Realizing her mistake, she stopped to look for them and catch her breath. Then, the Queen began spinning around wildly, possessed by the need to kill the unruly Night Fury that had escaped her too many times. He was sure that she could smell him, but not enough to locate him. Her own smoke had created that problem.

Toothless wasn't sure how, but Hiccup managed to navigate even in the dense clouds, and his efforts allowed him to circle the Queen unhindered. Now, they were the hunters of this extreme predator, corralling her like any other common animal. He could tell she hated the feeling of being prey-of fear-and he took satisfaction in that. She should know how it feels to be afraid.

Toothless and Hiccup attacked her from all angles, releasing fireball after fireball at her tattered wings. The light of the plasma blasts seemed to accompany the Queen's anguished roars, and to any unknowing observer, the scene would have been that of a violent storm-of thunder and lightning flashing and rumbling in the sky.

The pain of the repeated assaults whipped the Queen into a frenzy, and she began savagely releasing fire into the sky. The streams of flame followed her motions, illuminating the clouds with swirling inferno. One tendril was chasing Toothless and Hiccup quite relentlessly, and the dragon put all his effort into outpacing it. But it had been propelled forward too fast-too ferociously-and it managed to hit him.

"Watch out!" Hiccup screamed as the fire lashed out at them, and Toothless was able to move evasively enough to protect his rider from being flayed alive. But something was wrong behind him-something was burning..something that smelled of leather-his tail prosthetic.

Hiccup looked at the rapidly disintegrating tail-fin with fear, exclaiming "Time's up! Let's see if this works."

They had a plan from the moment she had taken flight. It was unspoken between them, but with a bond as great as theirs, they had no need to speak. They were one being, two halves of a whole, each one purposed with a specific function in this single body of perfect flight.

Hiccup navigated like a master, using his cleverness to think of the best routes, while Toothless used his raw power and instincts to gain the velocity they needed. No solo dragon could fly better. Perhaps no dragon \_with a rider \_could fly better.

They practically passed through the Queen's jaws to enter another nosedive, and she eagerly followed their path. She probably expected that she'd catch them easily in a fall, but the air resistance was even stronger against something of her size, and Hiccup and Toothless managed to stay out of her clutches. They were directly in front of her, though, which meant danger. But that had been their plan all along.

As they fell, it did not even register that they were separate species, creatures, or entities. They were extensions of each other, working in perfect synchronization in everything from their heartbeats to their thoughts. Toothless was no longer an individual-he was a "we" or an "us". And despite the fear that coursed through his veins, a part of him-of them-felt exhilarated, natural, and like they were truly, completely, and utterly \_living\_ in the strongest sense of the word.

But amidst such a unique sensation, Toothless could feel his artificial tail-fin crumbling in the strong wind. They didn't have much time left.

"Stay with me buddy," Hiccup urged him quickly. "We're good. Just a little bit longer."

The Queen was opening her jaws behind them, gas filling her throat. Hiccup realized it just as Toothless did, and he knew that the final calculation would ultimately rest on him-the physics expert. The one who had returned Toothless's lost flight.

So when Hiccup told him to hold, he obliged.

The ground was approaching so quickly, and the Queen was accumulating more and more gases, inhaling as she did so. If Hiccup didn't time this correctly, they would end up both flayed alive \_and\_ pancaked on the landscape.

But he had complete faith in his rider, and he built up a few gases of his own.

The inhaling stopped-she was about to fire.

"Now!" Hiccup yelled, and Toothless turned onto his back to stare directly into her face. He quickly launched another fireball into her mouth, and though it was small, it had much more destructive power than the last one. It lit the gases at the base of the Queen's throat, igniting her insides, which were, as Hiccup had once pointed out, not so fireproof. And this time, Toothless had not intended his fireball to be harmless.

As she thrashed and roared with agony, trying to put out a fire that she could not reach, she soon realized that the pain was the least of her problems. The ground was approaching rapidly, so she outstretched her enormous wings to slow her fall. But her velocity and weight were too great for the fragile skin on her wings, and they began to tear. She continued to fall unimpeded-burning, screeching, and tearing herself apart. Toothless almost felt bad-almost.

He soon outstretched his own wings, managing to slow his fall and maneuver to the side. As they rose, he heard the Queen hit the ground face-first, thus causing the loudest of crashes. It was more than just an impact-it was an explosion.

In her panic, she had apparently never stopped the constant flow of her gases, and they must have continued accumulating to a catastrophic point. With her final dying roar, she had detonated them, and now they were erupting into the sky.

Under normal circumstances, Toothless would have been able to fly to safety. But his deteriorated tail-fin had slowed him down considerably, and he struggled to fly past the Queen's falling backside, which had yet to meet up with her already-perished head.

The flames were gaining on them, surrounding them like a pack of hungry wolves, but Toothless wasn't afraid of fire. He continued flying upwards with persistence, determined to make it out. They were almost there too-they just had to pass over the Queen's tail.

But then their worst fear came true.

With a defeated jingle, the prosthetic detached and was quickly sucked into the inferno. As his attempts to adjust the tail-fin were met with only empty air, Hiccup soon realized what had happened. The tail-fin was gone, and they had lost the ability to navigate upwards. They soon began falling back down toward the flames.

Sadly, that was not the worst part. Without the capacity to steer, Toothless would ram directly into the plummeting tail, which would be horribly painful given its mace-like appearance. There was nothing they could do to stop it either. Both rider and dragon watched with horror and helplessness as it rushed toward them-it was Queen's final revenge. Perhaps she had outsmarted them too.

"No," Hiccup protested, his next word evolving into an anguished yell. "No!"

The tail smashed into both of their bodies, but Toothless could not help noticing that Hiccup took the brunt of impact. The force knocked his now-unconscious rider right off of his back, tearing clean

through the tether and pushing him downwards. Toothless, meanwhile, had been heaved to the side, the collision having actually pushed him farther into the sky.

The dragon was still conscious, though, and he twirled in the air, desperate to grab his rider.

No, Hiccup would not die like this-not here, not now. Not after all they had been through. After everything, the Queen would not kill this boy-because if she killed him...she would kill Toothless too. They were two halves of a whole. One could not exist without the other.

Without the ability to maneuver, a dive-bomb was an extremely dangerous trick to try. But Toothless didn't care. He angled himself directly downward, flapping his tired wings to gain even more velocity-probably enough to kill him when he hit the ground. But once again, nothing mattered to him but saving Hiccup from those hungry flames. If he could just get his wings around the boy...then maybe...maybe he'd be okay.

Toothless's head was very close to Hiccup now, and in his desperation, he could think of only one way to save his friend. It was a terrible idea-one that would probably haunt him for the rest of his life. But he had no choice-if he didn't do it, Hiccup would surely perish in the fire.

Closing his eyes, Toothless opened his jaws, and with a final effort from his wings, he was able to get near enough to close his teeth around the lower part of Hiccup's left leg. He then used his grip on the limb to swing the boy's body toward his stomach, quickly enclosing them both in Toothless's fireproof black wings.

When Toothless released Hiccup's leg, he knew it had been horribly mangled. No leg was supposed to bend the way that his rider's was, and guilt briefly surged through the dragon's heart. But if he had to choose between losing the leg and losing all of Hiccup, he would choose the former in a heartbeat.

Now enclosed by sweltering walls of fire, Toothless crashed into the ground with agonizing force, rolling to break their fall. He made sure that his back took the impact instead of Hiccup's limp body, which was delicately tucked under his wings. After all, his rider had taken the majority of the impact last time, and it had almost killed him.

Blow after blow hit Toothless as he rolled along the ground, and he constantly shifted himself to make sure only he hit the rocks, not his rider. Somehow, he remained conscious amidst the constant fire and collisions, driven by only a single thought: protect Hiccup.

Eventually, their rolling slowed to a standstill, and the dragon lay motionless on the ground, his body bent in an awkward position. To protect his rider, Toothless had placed his wings at his side, Hiccup tucked tenderly beneath them. But the pose hurt-dragons were not supposed to bend their wings that way. In fact, everything hurt-his whole body was a screaming chorus of complaints. He was sure he had multiple broken bones, and probably some sort of head injury as well.

But none of that really mattered-not the smoldering heat, nor the broken bones, nor his aching head-because Hiccup was safe under his wing, breathing quietly-a sure sign that he was still alive.

Relieved, the dragon succumbed to unconsciousness. They had made it after allâ€¦

## 27. When the Smoke Clears

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*Third to last chapter! Oh god...this is so sad! Okay, the chapter isn't sad, but ending the story itself is sad-for me, at least.  
\*\***

**\*\*As many of you have probably realized, I posted the next chapter too early-before this one. I was posting via mobile, and it did the wrong one. It has been deleted until tomorrow, just to avoid overwhelming you guys! Sorry! I'm sure many of you got confused at the strange gap in time that \*\*\*\*occurred. Again, I'm really sorry. It was plain unprofessional to post the other one. \*\***

**\*\*2-part epilogue is next! Hooray! (If you haven't read the first part already)\*\***

**\*\*And I added in a little Hiccstrid (sort of). You're welcome.  
\*\***

**\*\*Enjoy! \*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>While Toothless was unconscious, he did not expect to dream. Unconsciousness was supposed to be a blank blackness, filled with nothing but exhaustion and faint bodily pain. But a voice continued to pester him from the edges of his subconscious, frantically and repeatedly calling out a name.<p>

"Hiccup!" it yelled. "Hiccup!"

Toothless briefly wondered whether the voice was his-or at least, the voice he would have if he were human. He sometimes wondered what it was like to be human. He knew he was not meant to be one, but he was certainly curious about how it felt to be so...fleshy...hairy...and good with tools.

He realized that such odd dreams probably befit his injuries. Imagining himself as a human? What a ridiculous notion! Why would he want to be one of those? Dexterous hands were not ample compensation for a lack of flight or fire. Indeed, he must have hit his head especially hard to even consider existence as a human.

The voice persisted, though, meaning that it was not a manifestation of the dragon's imagination. With a few seconds of strained listening, Toothless soon determined that the voice was familiar. Its

gruff tone and slight accent were unique enough to be recognizable, but he still struggled to place it in his memories. Toothless's head felt like a million-pound-weight filled with honey, and thinking was like trying to move \_through\_ that honey.

Then the voice screamed, "Son!" and Toothless finally identified the speaker.

It was Stoick, Hiccup's father. He must have been looking for his child.

Toothless's other senses returned very slowly, but hearing was definitely the first to present itself. The dragon could hear ragged breaths approaching his location. But where \_was\_ his location? Was he...on a cliff? In a gorge? He didn't know, and his eyes would not open so he could find out.

Toothless wasn't sure that the raggedly breathing creature was Stoick. It certainly seemed likely, but without his sense of smell or his eyesight, it could be \_the Queen\_ for all he knew.

Worried by the thought, the dragon began trying to mentally shake himself out of his stupor. He was too vulnerable like this-Hiccup was too vulnerable like this. He could have died underneath his wing for all he knew!

But no...he could hear Hiccup still breathing quietly. That was good. That was one less thing to worry about.

Toothless's sense of smell returned next, but it didn't help him in the least. He could only detect an overwhelming amount of smoke and ash, almost like a volcano had erupted. His groggy mind momentarily wondered what had occurred, but then he remembered that the Queen had actually \_exploded\_. How could he forget a thing like that?

That was it. He needed to wake up-now.

With an enormous amount of effort, Toothless managed to slightly shift his leaden head, moaning softly as he did so. But even that minute movement had drained his energy, and he had to take a few seconds to recollect his strength.

Meanwhile, he heard the voice again-much closer this time.

"Oh son," it whispered in despair. "I did this."

It was definitely Stoick, and as the smoke continued to clear, he could begin to smell other Vikings too. And not just a few-all of the Vikings were gathered off to the side, completely silent save the sounds of their breathing. But Toothless could sense something else on them...something like sorrow-it was rolling off of them in waves.

But what were they so sad about? The Queen was dead, and everyone was safeâ€|Toothless didn't understandâ€|

Then he remembered that Hiccup was hidden under his wings. To them, it probably looked like Hiccup had disintegrated in the fire, and they had already started mourning their fallen hero. He couldn't let them think that!



Moaning again, Toothless lifted his head and opened his eyes, staring tiredly at the bizarre world around him.

The air was like a solid gray mass, occasionally peppered with pieces of ash. With all that smoke, the distant crowd seemed hazy...distorted. The vapors even made it look like there were dragons sitting among the humans, but he knew that couldn't be possible-the feud couldn't end that quickly. Toothless supposed it was a hallucination, and he looked away. Staring made his eyes hurt, anyway.

But when his eyes found Stoick kneeling in front of him, looking so utterly heartbroken, the dragon couldn't stop looking at him. This man-this normally powerful and incredibly strong man-had been crushed emotionally. He was now reminiscent of a once-mighty building collapsing in on itself-of something that had given up and fallen apart. Toothless didn't blame him for being so weak, either. Stoick thought his only son had died, consumed by fire, and that Toothless had failed to save him.

He truly wanted to show them that Hiccup was alive, safe under his wings, but his body was so slow to respondâ€¦

"I'm sorry...I'm so sorry," Stoick softly sobbed, his normally fierce face completely despondent.

Stupid wings. Why wouldn't they move?

Finally, with that irritated thought, Toothless was finally brought to full consciousness, and his wings responded. They unfolded to reveal Hiccup's body underneath, which Toothless's legs were curled protectively around. Upon seeing his son, Stoick made a mad grab for the boy. The bedraggled dragon moved his legs out of the way with exasperation, unsure whether the man would rip them clean off in his hysterics. Toothless knew that nothing was going to come between Stoick and his son-even the legs of the boy's savior.

Stoick held Hiccup's arms, his face searching every inch of the boy's face for injuries. He then wildly threw down his helmet, placing his ear to Hiccup's chest to hear his steady breaths and heartbeats. Toothless wished he could just tell Stoick that his child was alive, but of course, that wasn't possible. Stoick would have to find out for himself.

And he did. Hiccup's father began to cry with joy, his voice breaking as he announced, "He's alive! You brought him back aliveâ€¦"

Apparently hearing their leader's words, the crowd of Vikings erupted into cheers. Everyone was suddenly clapping their hands and screaming joyfully, ecstatic that their heroes had made it through the fight. But to Toothless, such sounds were too noisy. His head hurt monumentally, and with his level of hearing, every clap sounded like an explosion.

Toothless thought back to his initial impression of Vikings-they were always so loud with their hollering, breaking, and building. Despite all of his changed perceptions, the dragon believed that particular fact still rang true.

Stoick put a hand on Toothless's head, his newfound affection and gratitude toward the dragon easily perceivable. The touch was very gentle too-not something Toothless would expect from a man that could literally rip iron apart.

But then exhaustion overcame Toothless's body again, and his head dropped back down on the rocks. Luckily, his eyes stayed open, and they urged Stoick to get Hiccup the help he needed. Dragons healed quickly...but humans? He didn't know, so he assumed that they didn't.

"Thank you for saving my son," Stoick said quietly. But Toothless didn't need to be told such things. It wasn't like he had been thinking about Stoick when he had saved Hiccup-he was thinking about Hiccup and himself. Slight guilt filled his heart, remembering that his rider had other people that probably worried about him too...

Meanwhile, the blonde-haired Viking had apparently joined them, and he added in quite tactlessly, "Well, most of him anyway." His gaze was aimed at Hiccup's mangled lower leg.

Stoick gave the Viking a very pointed look, and Toothless couldn't help but feel more guilt. The damaged leg was his fault, after all.

Astrid interrupted the rather tense moment, stepping forward to offer to bring Hiccup back to Berk on her Deadly Nadder. It seemed that there were a few Vikings left there, along with a few fishing vessels. She told Stoick that she could send them word, and have the rescue boats at the Nest by the end of the day. Everyone would have to be brought back in trips, of course, but eventually, they'd all return safe and sound.

Toothless wasn't exactly eager to let Hiccup leave with a novice rider, and Stoick probably looked even less thrilled. But if the boy had serious injuries beneath the surface, they both knew that he'd have return to Berk as soon as possible.

Toothless still wished that he could bring his rider there-just to make sure he met his destination safely. But with Hiccup unconscious, his prosthetic destroyed, and his (albeit healing) injuries, Toothless was essentially flightless.

So the dragon sat-useless and bitter-as Stoick lifted his son onto the Nadder's back. He was placed directly in front of Astrid, and she caged him between her arms. That gave Toothless some-though insufficient-comfort. At least his chances of falling were less positioned that way. But flying with an unconscious rider would still be dangerous, especially since Hiccup couldn't even sit up properly. Toothless noticed that Hiccup was slouching weakly against Astrid, and given their lack of a tether, one wrong bank or spin would probably knock them both right off.

At the sight of Hiccup in Astrid's arms, a few people from the crowd made odd whistling sounds, and the identical children started chanting about the two sitting in a tree. Confused, Toothless failed to grasp how trees were relevant to this particular situation-he supposed it was one of those human jokes.

However, trees were apparently offensive, because Astrid blushed and yelled, "Shut it!"

Then, with a few reassuring sentences to Stoick, which mostly comprised of the repeated phrases "Hiccup's going to be fine" and "I'll be back soon," she took off, taking Toothless's rider with her.

Meanwhile, the other dragon riders tried to convince some Vikings to ride back with them, just to make the process go faster. The humans were very reluctant at first-many even regarded the trained dragons with fear. Nevertheless, some of them-the brave ones-agreed, climbing nervously onto their backs and shrieking a bit when the dragons took off. But those Vikings were smart in their choice, and they returned to Berk before anyone else-save Hiccup and Astrid of course. Stoick was one of those to leave early. Lucky him.

But Toothless couldn't fly home. No, he would be the only dragon forced to return by boat.

He hated boats. The last time he had been on a boat, he had almost died.

So when the ships arrived hours later, it took five burly Vikings to wrestle Toothless onto one of the decks, and five more to hold him still during the voyage, thus preventing him from causing havoc. And that was only because he had let them. After all, Hiccup was waiting for him on Berk, and the sea was his only viable mode of transportation.

That didn't mean Toothless had to like it, though. Or be patient about it, for that matter.

## 28. Balance

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: I OWN NOTHING\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*Epilogue part one! I had to break it into two-it was getting too long. \*\***

**\*\*Nothing left to say, really. Enjoy!\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Toothless pounded his paws against the roof, each impact resulting in a boom and a clatter. By now, the shingles on its surface were bent and crushed from repeatedly catching the dragon's heavy weight. Further destruction was indicated by falling pieces of wooden debris, which had been continuously displaced by the commotion. But Toothless didn't care about the damage he had caused. He was fed up.<p>

The dragon had grown impatient with all this infernal waiting. For almost a week now, he had waited outside the little Viking hut, hoping that Hiccup would come out-or more accurately, hoping to even get a glance at his rider. What was Hiccup doing in there anyway?

Why couldn't he come out?

Apparently, dragons had thus been proven to heal quickly, because Toothless had completely recovered in less than a week. He was itching to fly again-to fly with Hiccup. But the boy was still in his stupid hut, probably doing silly...Viking things. Things that he assumed were far less important than flying, anyway.

So he had climbed onto the roof and jumped freely on it, hoping to tell Hiccup that Toothless was here and needed to go flying now. That meant that his rider had to come out and take him for a lap around the island. It wasn't a choice, either-they were going whether Hiccup wanted to or not.

But that resolution was soon shaken. With a series of irritated grumbles, Stoick exited the hut, quickly closing the door behind him before Toothless could get a look inside. He could smell that Hiccup was in there too-it wasn't fair!

"Oi! Get down from there!" Stoick called with aggravation.

Stoick had been Toothless's greatest obstacle when trying to get to Hiccup. Everytime he had tried to sneak into the house, the boy's father had promptly caught him and barred the door. Stoick accepted and trusted Toothless, but not enough to let him into his home. In fact, no one was really allowed inside but Stoick, the blonde-haired Viking whom he had come to know as Gobber, and a very small old lady named Gothi. Everyone else was treated like an unwelcome intruder in the house-even Astrid. He always slammed the door in her face too.

In fact, Stoick had been particularly ill-tempered ever since he had returned to Berk. When the dragon had arrived in the village after his awful boat ride, the man had been sitting outside a hut (which he later came to know as Hiccup's hut), his head in his hands. Toothless didn't know how to react to that sort of sadness, but luckily, he didn't have to. Gobber soon had taken care of that, joining his friend and asking "What'd Gothi say?" There had been worry in his voice. That Toothless had remembered quite clearly.

From then, Toothless had heard only snippets of whispered conversation.

"-remove it-"

"-for the best-"

"-never walk right again..."

"-good with prosthetics-"

Toothless had wondered what they were talking about. The subject matter seemed pretty serious-something that Stoick had trouble dealing with. A part of him even worried if the problem involved Hiccup, but before he could begin bothering the two for an explanation, they had started going into the hut. When they had opened the door, the dragon had detected Hiccup's scent inside, and Toothless had thus tried to go in.

"No! You stay out there!" Stoick had told him sternly, blocking the

entrance before closing the door in his face-an occurrence that had since become common, actually. At first, Toothless had thought that his distrust of dragons had returned. But from that point on, he had acted that way toward everyone, not just dragons.

Stoick had locked himself in that house for days, probably trapping Hiccup in there with him. And as far as Toothless could tell, it was horribly quiet in there, too. They must have been sitting in complete silence, which the dragon thought must have been deathly boring. Hiccup should have just come outside!

At some point during that several day waiting period, the old lady had come to visit. While she had been there, Toothless thought he had smelled human blood coming from inside the house. But he supposed he had imagined that. Maybe Stoick had been cooking yak, and the dragon had misidentified it.

Presently, Stoick continued yelling at him from the ground. "Didn't you hear me, Toothless? Get down before you burst through the roof!"

The dragon snorted in annoyance, scrambling down the side of the house. Bursting through the roof had been his back-up plan if Hiccup failed to come out. But he guessed both plans had been foiled now.

As he reached the ground next to Stoick, Toothless let out a pleading moan. He just wanted to see Hiccup. What was so bad about that?

"I've said it once and I'll say it again: you can't see him!" Stoick told him, wagging his finger at the dragon patronizingly. "Why don't you go find Astrid? She can play with you."

But Toothless didn't want to play with Astrid. He wanted to play with Hiccup.

To express this, he growled petulantly at Stoick before glancing at the door, already planning to ram it down.

Seeing his devious expression, Stoick moved in front of the entrance, holding his arms out to stop a possibly charging dragon. "I said no, Toothless!"

"What's awl the fuss about?" Gobber interrupted, freshly arriving at the hut with a set of metal tools. Toothless noticed that Gobber had brought a lot of tools to the hut lately. Was he building something in there? Maybe he was bringing them for Hiccup, who always seemed to love tools.

"I need you to watch the house. Make sure Toothless doesn't get in."

"You're finally leavin'? Well, light me on fire!" Gobber trailed off, but he added, "Not really" after Toothless shot him an inquisitive glance.

"I'm gonna help the others set up the feeding stations. It'll take my mind off of things for a while...and I know Hiccup'll appreciate it," Stoick said, his tone a bit sad.

The Vikings had set up all sorts of neat accommodations for dragons, and now his kin flew freely throughout the town. At the sight of them, Toothless's need to fly with Hiccup had only increased. It wasn't fair that they could fly while he was stuck on the ground.

Thus, at the sound of his rider's name, Toothless gave another pleading moan. This time, it was directed at Gobber, whom was oftentimes less strict than Stoick. Gobber would sometimes play with Toothless, or give him unintelligible pieces of news about Hiccup (or at least that was who he thought they were about. He honestly couldn't tell with Gobber's accent). He also knew that the Viking was rebuilding his tail prosthetic using designs that Hiccup had made, and that had since earned him a special place in the dragon's heart.

But Toothless recognized that they were all keeping things from him, including Gobber. For some reason, they didn't want him to know anything about how Hiccup was feeling. Maybe they didn't want him playing with the Viking boy anymore. Or maybe they didn't want him to worry about Hiccup's recovery.

But in Toothless's mind, if Hiccup was conscious, it was time to go flying. So he bothered them anyway.

"Oh c'mon, Stoick. Wha' harm could he really do?" Now Gobber had joined the argument, apparently vocalizing Toothless's thoughts.

Stoick gave his friend a pointed look-one that clearly expressed that a heavy, overly energetic dragon could do a lot of harm.

However, Gobber still thought differently. "This dragon saved your son's life. He's not gonna hurt 'em. Sides, he'll stop botherin' if you just give em' wha' he wants."

The accent made Gobber a bit difficult to understand, but Toothless was sure that he was arguing in his favor. To help persuade Stoick, the dragon dilated his eyes and gave him an incredibly adorable stare. When he had dealt with Astrid's oftentimes meager food allowances, Toothless had learned that humans could sometimes be swayed by such gazes. For instance: one cute look at Fishlegs (he had learned the names of all the riders) would earn him a heaping basket of fish.

However, it appeared to have no effect on Stoick, because he harshly replied, "No!" before beginning to walk toward the incomplete feeding stations.

"Fine," Gobber said casually. "I was just thinking about how happy the boy'd be...wakin' up with the dragon righ' there"

Toothless still couldn't really understand Gobber, but that particular comment seemed to get under Stoick's skin. He stopped in his tracks, sighing with exasperation. "Fine," he agreed finally. "But if he breaks anything, it's on you."

Then the chief walked away, leaving Gobber and Toothless alone. As Gobber unlocked the door, the dragon bounced excitedly. Finally! He

was going to see Hiccup, fly, fish, and do all sorts of fun things!

Gobber turned to Toothless as he pushed the creaky, wooden door open. "Now, ya better be careful. Stoick's very protective of his things, and Hiccup's not exactly up to-WHOA!"

The Viking didn't get to finish. Once the door was wide enough, the dragon had zipped past him, nearly knocking Gobber over as he rushed inside.

Beyond excited, Toothless began scurrying around the little hut, examining and smelling everything. So this is what a human house looked like from the insideâ€

Everything was made of wood, which Toothless thought was sort of dangerous, especially with the crackling firepit in the center of the room. One stray spark, and the entire place would be ablaze. But he supposed there was something cozy about the atmosphere-almost like he was inside a tree. A tree with a heart of fire.

Off to the side, he saw a table with a single matching chair. There were other trinkets too-things like weapons, animal furs, eating utensils, and bottles of herbs and substances that smelled really strange to Toothless. A small desk sat in the corner, and the dragon approached it. Its surface was covered with paper drawings of odd mechanical contraptions. Sure that these were Hiccup's, Toothless nosed through them. He eventually found a rough sketch of himself and a variety of saddle designs.

Upon turning around, Toothless finally found the other matching chair, which had been pulled to the side of a bed. He inched toward it, trying to get the big chair out of his line of sight. Once he did, he finally found his rider-Hiccup was sleeping in the bed, enclosed in blankets, silent and unmoving.

Disappointed, Toothless realized that the boy was still comatose. He hadn't been trapped in the house after all-he had been physically unable to leave.

The dragon let out a sad moan, curling up next to his rider's bed. Why had it taken this long for him to wake up? Was he more injured than Toothless had thought?

As he looked at Hiccup's battered, frail body, he realized that it was very possible.

When he entered, Gobber stopped by the table and picked up a metal device that Toothless had overlooked. It was sort of a tarnished silvery color, smelling strongly of iron, and was reminiscent of the prosthetic on Gobber's own leg. After a few brief fiddlings with his metal tools, the Viking held up the contraption in triumph, declaring, "That's it! I think she's done!"

He brought it over to Hiccup and proceeded to pull back the boy's blankets. Watching intrigued, Toothless felt his breath catch as he saw the lower half of Hiccup's left leg. It was nothing but a stump now, heavily covered in bandages that smelled vaguely of blood.

Gobber held the device to the stump's side, scratching his chin as he scrutinized them both. He then turned to Toothless, asking, "What d'you think? You think she'll fit?"

The prosthetic was meant for Hiccup, the dragon realized, his heart filling with immense guilt. In truth, the prosthetic looked well-made-the perfect size for Hiccup's slim leg. And Gobber's version seemed to work plenty fine-but that did little to ease the shame that Toothless felt.

"Oh, don't look so worried. The boy'll be fine. Sides, you got on with a missin' tail-fin, didn't ya?" Gobber added, admiring his own handiwork on the prosthetic with a slight smile. He then began to leave the hut, giving Toothless a brief pat on the head as he departed. "Tell us when he wakes up." The door was then pulled close, leaving Toothless with nothing but the sounds of Hiccup's quiet breathing and a dying fire.

\* \* \*

><p>Time passed very sluggishly as Toothless waited by Hiccup's bedside. When Stoick had come back that night, he had tried to force the dragon to leave the house. But Toothless had made such indignant and heartbroken moans that Stoick eventually allowed him to stay. After all-the house was intact, and Hiccup hadn't been injured any more, so why would Stoick kick him out?<p>

Eventually, Toothless's presence in the hut became commonplace, and Stoick would often give him a gruff greeting when he returned home. He saw that Toothless never left Hiccup's side, and with time, he began asking the dragon for updates on his son's condition at the end of the day. Of course, Toothless couldn't answer, but he supposed Stoick just liked having someone to talk to-someone who understood exactly what he was going through.

At night, they sat around Hiccup's bedside in a worried little group, both silent and thoughtful. Then, at around midnight, Stoick would go to his own bed, giving Toothless a brief, affectionate pat as he left his chair.

Toothless would eventually fall asleep too-but he would keep his ears strained for the sound of Hiccup waking.

Gothi came back a few times, and Stoick would always question her urgently about why Hiccup hadn't woken up yet. In response, she would make gestures that insisted he wait patiently and that Hiccup was fine, but Toothless and Stoick both had trouble believing her. They were equally impatient and overprotective, and when she left, their exasperated sigh was collective.

Sometimes, Astrid would visit. Stoick had become more lenient once Toothless had taken up residence in the house, and her presence was no longer unwelcome. Unlike Stoick, who always sat in the chair, she would sit beside Toothless on the floor, petting him absent-mindedly as she watched Hiccup sleep.

Snotlout, Fishlegs, Ruffnut, and Tuffnut were frequent visitors as well, but their rowdiness would often cause Stoick to expel them within the first fifteen minutes. And if Stoick wasn't home, Toothless would kick them out for him, using his roar as a



replacement for the chief's commanding yells.

Gobber came back many times too. Once, he removed Hiccup's bandages, replacing them with the now-operational and attached tail-prosthetic. Gobber had looked to Toothless for approval, and of course, he gave it in the form of a purr. Toothless and Hiccup matched now, he supposed. They both had prosthetics of their own.

But the introduction of the prosthetic didn't wake Hiccup. Nothing did.

But for some reason, waiting for Hiccup to wake never felt boring exactly, no matter how long it took. His hours were filled with unmet hopes and contemplative thoughts.

In one reflection, Toothless considered how he had lost his tail-fin at the boy's hands, and though he had felt no hard feelings about that, he suspected that fate had. Somehow, the friends' situation had eventually reversed itself, and Toothless had soon become responsible for the loss of Hiccup's lower leg. It was certainly an odd twist of fate, and it felt wrong to think that such tragedies were meant to happen. But in reality, it seemed like Hiccup and Toothless were balanced now. They were both missing something important-something that's place could only be filled with each other's presence. In the sky and with each other, they could forget about their disabilities, because Hiccup compensated for Toothless's weakness, and Toothless would do the same for Hiccup. They were vulnerable without each other, but complete together.

## 29. No Longer Alone

**\*\*AND JUST TO DISCLAIM ONE MORE TIME: \*\*\*\*I DO NOT OWN TOOTHLESS, HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON, THE CHARACTERS, THE PLOT, THE SCENES, THE DIALOGUE, OR ANYTHING HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON RELATED. THAT ALL BELONGS TO DREAMWORKS AND CRESSIDA COWELL.\*\***

**\*\*A.N.\*\***

**\*\*I promised myself that the last chapter wouldn't be the name of the story but...I broke that promise. \*\*\*\*What can I say? I'm a sucker for a good cliché. \*\*\*\*Actually, this whole chapter is pretty much a cliché. Sorry?\*\***

**\*\*I am now happy to provide you all with the concluding chapter of No Longer Alone. As is customary, I hope you all enjoy. \*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Like any day within the past three weeks, the morning began with a daily routine; Stoick woke the entire house up (save for Hiccup) with a massive yawn, cooked breakfast, tossed Toothless a few fish, and then went out to attend to his chiefing duties. As he left, he reminded Toothless to look after Hiccup-such requests were now so habitual that it was almost like Toothless had always lived there. Through his ceaseless loyalty, the dragon had earned his place in the family, and Stoick seemed to agree with his admittance.<p>

As Toothless lay beside his rider's bed, he heard something in the normally silent house. It was a groan-extremely quiet and probably

undetectable by human ears. But he had heard it all the same...and it had come from Hiccup.

Toothless sat up wildly, frantic to look at his rider. Hiccup hadn't made any sounds in all his days of unconsciousness...but nowâ€|now he had. Could that mean what Toothless hoped it meant?

As the dragon watched, he saw Hiccup lift his arm out from under the covers to scratch his nose in his sleep, and he then laid the arm back along his stomach. The boy hadn't moved before either, which could only mean one thing-Hiccup was waking up.

Toothless was overwhelmed with joy in knowing that his rider with soon wake up, but the knowledge also made him impatient again. Moving his head close to Hiccup's, he scrutinized the boy's face for any evidence of further movement, but he only saw slight shifts in his mouth or motion beneath his eyelids. Toothless wanted to shake him awake so badly, but he knew Stoick would disapprove of that, so he tried to keep himself at bay. Instead, the dragon exhaled heavily, trying to harmlessly urge his rider to wake with the gust of air, but Hiccup's reactions were far from those of the conscious.

Toothless soon pulled his head back, reevaluating his tactics. What other ways could he indirectly wake Hiccup up?

Well, dragons were always making natural noises-it was in their nature. And Toothless was a dragon, after all. It would be a terrible shame if he were to start roaring and disrupting Hiccup's slumber, Toothless thought. A terrible shame, indeed, but also a seemingly unavoidable one. At least to Stoick, anyway.

But the dragon was not mean enough to roar-that would be a terrible way to start someone's day. So he settled on relatively loud snorts, sniffles, and gurgles.

At the sounds, the boy's eyes began cracking open tiredly, and he blinked a bit at the light.

He was awake! All bets were off-the time for patience was over!

Toothless began forcefully and incessantly nuzzling his rider, overcome with too much excitement and relief to really care about whether the contact was too rough. In all honesty, the nuzzles were more like headbutts, and Stoick would have probably scolded him heavily for being so aggressive. But that didn't matter to him right now. Nothing did-nothing except for the fact that Hiccup was awake. Finally awake!

"Hey Toothless," he whispered hoarsely, using his hands to try to block the onslaught of strong nuzzles. "I'm happy to see you too, bud."

But the dragon was still completely overwhelmed with joy at something as simple as the boy's consciousness, and he proceeded to affectionately lick Hiccup's face. The nuzzles had knocked his rider farther away, so he climbed up onto the bed to reach him better.

That, of course, had been a mistake. Toothless accidentally stepped on Hiccup's stomach, and the boy cried out in pain. At the sound, the dragon immediately retreated. He worried that if Hiccup became hurt again, he would go back into that coma, and Toothless would be alone again. So he waited and watched for a few seconds, making sure that was not the case.

The distance gave Hiccup a chance to absorb his surroundings, and he looked around with confusion.

"I'm...in my house," he observed with perplexity, soon turning back to Toothless. "Uh...\_you're\_ in my house?"

The dragon took speech as an indication of continuous consciousness, but he still stayed back, wary of the boy's injuries. Instead, he jumped uncontrollably all over the hut, knocking over Stoick's possessions and climbing the rafters with jubilation. Hiccup soon began protesting the rowdy behavior, and he thus tried to sit up.

His rider became very quiet all of a sudden. Toothless suspected that the movement had alerted him to his missing lower leg, and he saw Hiccup lift up his blankets to look. Noticeably more solemn, the dragon climbed down from the rafters, looking at Hiccup curiously. He wondered how the boy would react to the newfound disability.

Unlike Toothless, who had experienced denial and flailed wildly when he discovered his missing tail-fin, Hiccup took a deep breath and swung his legs over the side of the bed. Toothless immediately sniffed the silvery prosthetic, wondering if it was uncomfortable or difficult to walk in. But he received no answers from its scent, so he looked inquisitively at his rider. Surprisingly, Hiccup seemed \_almost\_ okay-his breathing was a bit heavy, and he looked a little sad, but he was otherwise very calm.

Then, Hiccup tried to walk, using the bedpost as an anchor. Standing seemed to take a lot of effort, but it seemed like he was going to be successful in the endeavor-until he took his second step, that is. Hiccup fell forward with a groan, but Toothless was ready, and he caught the boy with his head. His rider leaned against him for a few seconds, and the dragon could feel his fear and confusion in the rapid beats of his heart. But Toothless also knew that there was bravery in those heartbeats, and he pushed Hiccup back onto his feet, sure that he would learn to walk again. If anyone could do it, it was Hiccup.

"Thanks, bud."

But Hiccup wasn't prepared to let go of Toothless just yet, and that was fine with him. He let the boy use him as a crutch as he limped toward the door, thinking about what a pair they were-a dragon that couldn't fly without human help, and a human that couldn't walk without a dragon's help.

Together, they reached the door, and Hiccup struggled to undo the lock. As soon as he swung it open, though, he was greeted by the roar of the Monstrous Nightmare now known as Hookfang. Of course, he panicked, not expecting the once-hostile creature to be right outside, and he quickly slammed the door shut.

"Toothless," Hiccup breathed, pressed against the door with fear, "Stay here."

As his rider reopened the door, gazing out at the human and dragon populated town, the dragon supposed that the boy was in for many more surprises. It was not the same Berk he remembered.

In reality, Snotlout was leading the other riders in a dragon race, which Hiccup soon realized. He also noticed the feeding stations and hundreds of dragons, all grazing peacefully among the Vikings. Toothless recognized such changes were probably unbelievable to Hiccup, especially since he had not seen how they came to be.

"I knew it. I'm dead," he decided, unable to accept that this peaceful world was a reality.

Stoick was soon beside his son, trying to suppress his elation at Hiccup's return to consciousness-something that Toothless had failed at miserably. His only expression of affection was the arm he put around the boy. But the dragon could smell the salty, joyous tears that threatened to pour out. He was only acting tough to maintain the respect of his son and his people.

"No, but you gave it your best shot. So...what do you think? " Stoick asked, gesturing to the new and improved village and steering his son toward it. Toothless followed his rider's instructions, though, and watched from within the hut.

Hiccup was a bit too stunned to respond immediately, but even if he was thinking of a reply, his train of thought was soon interrupted by the yells of the Vikings. They were announcing his return to the outside world, and they soon crowded around him.

Hiccup talked with his father and Gobber for a bit before Astrid came strolling in. Instead of fawning over him like everyone else, she punched him in the arm-hard-and Hiccup cried out.

"That's for scaring me," she said in mock contempt.

"Wha-What?" Toothless's rider stammered, quickly becoming irritated. "Is it always going to be this-?"

He didn't get to finish, though. Not before Astrid did that lip-peck thing again-this time right on Hiccup's lips. The other Vikings made little sighing sounds, probably thinking that the young love was cute. By the time Astrid released Hiccup, his irritation had disappeared, and he stood sort of dazed.

"-I could get used to it," Toothless heard his rider finish.

Gobber then placed the new tail-prosthetic in Hiccup's arms, and the dragon took that as an invitation to leave. He moaned, alerting the people that he was exiting the house for the first time in weeks. They would probably be happy about that too-the Vikings admired him almost as much as they did Hiccup.

"Night Fury!" they screamed jokingly. "Get down!"

As he lunged over the crowd, Toothless jumped onto the shoulders of two unsuspecting men, and they were soon pulled to the ground by the

dragon's weight. Everyone laughed, thinking he was just being playful. But in truth, Toothless really didn't want anything to get between him and his rider again-especially not now that Hiccup was, without a doubt, ready to fly.

He cooed, and the boy gave him a look that returned his eagerness to take off.

\* \* \*

><p>Soon enough, the new artificial tail-fin was attached, and Hiccup had learned to use his new prosthetic to operate the pedal. Things were different now...for both of them. But their friendship-their bond remained as strong, if not stronger, than ever.<p>

Astrid stood beside them on her Deadly Nadder, whom she had named Stormfly. They were preparing to race, and Toothless supposed that would be a good way to get back into the swing of things.

"You ready?" Hiccup asked him, patting his head briefly. Toothless nodded and purred in response. He was more than ready-this is what he had waited for during those three long weeks.

And it was all worth it.

Both dragons extended their wings, flapping them to quickly become airborne. The race was on.

Toothless's wings were stiff from disuse, and that allowed Astrid and Stormfly to get a lead on them. But he was very determined, and so was Hiccup. That lead would not last for long-the sky was theirs. They had claimed it long ago, together.

The competitors navigated between huts and tunnels, diving toward the water and flying along the cliffs. Fully enjoying the sensation of being in the air again, Toothless released a screech of pure happiness, and so did Hiccup. Euphoria was a shared emotion between them.

Seeing the fun, the other riders soon joined the race. They all wanted to know how they would fare against the friends that had broken down the barriers between a feuding species-that had ended the reign of a terrible tyrant.

Eventually, Toothless and Hiccup lunged ahead of the rest of the group, including Astrid and Stormfly. The time for physical recovery was over, and Toothless began defending his title of "Fastest Dragon" with a vengeance. He was not about to let these \_novice\_ riders win. Perhaps he was pretentious, or overestimated his own abilities, but with Hiccup flying with him, the world seemed entirely conquerable. It wasn't an enemy to him-not anymore. It was a place to be explored...to be flown around at impossible speeds...to be shared with his rider.

As he flew on, Toothless noticed all the Vikings below interacting with the dragons. The feud was over, and he knew that there would be more dragon riders soon-perhaps hundreds of them. All the Vikings would probably claim to have an inseparable bond with their dragons, and Toothless would probably believe them. But he also knew that those bonds would never come close to the one he had with

Hiccup.

Hiccup wasn't just his rider or his friend; Hiccup was Toothless, just as Toothless was Hiccup. And though they were physically separate, they felt as though they were one-two halves of a whole, a human with the soul of a dragon and a dragon with the soul of a human.

It was certainly strange, being two different creatures but still entirely one being. Despite that, it felt so incredibly right that the peculiarity went completely unnoticed. Toothless realized that he was not meant to be alone-he never had been. Somehow, no matter the circumstances, he would have found Hiccup...would have befriended him. It wasn't possible for such unbelievably similar and ultimately identical creatures to exist by coincidence. No, something had intended them to find each other-to quell the loneliness in each other's hearts. Together, they were no longer alone, no longer so "different"-because despite being outcasts among their own kind, they had found someone who reflected them. And perhaps the reflection wasn't a perfect likeness, but that was okay. That was what made it work.

Now enjoying a trick they had once found dangerous, Toothless and Hiccup began a steep climb into the sky. They flew toward the sun, their hearts beating simultaneously as their yells and roars merged into a single sound of blissful exhilaration. Higher and higher they flew, unimpeded by fear or weakness.

They had no time for such things now. Fear and weakness belonged with the lonely things...the things that dwelled in darkness. But Hiccup and Toothless? They preferred to stay in the sun, reveling in bravery, strength, and love-things they had now found in each other and themselves.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>I am now happy to announce that this story is complete. If you've made it this far, you're amazing, and I am so grateful for your devotion to my work. <strong>\*\*I hope you liked my interpretation of Toothless and HTTYD. I know my story was far from perfect, and maybe it wasn't the Toothless that you all imagined, but I had so much fun writing it.\*\*

\*\*I'll be writing another Toothless POV about Gift of the Night Fury ASAP, so please stay tuned for that. I'm also planning a more original story of my own. I probably will not have time to write a Defenders or Riders of Berk POV from Toothless, but my original story will probably include his POV. \*\*

\*\*Before you go, I'd be very thankful if you'd leave a review. Tell me how I did and what I could do better-it would help me immensely. I'd be especially grateful for tips on my writing/grammar/language, since my hopeful-career will be dependent on that. \*\*

\*\*But most of all-a humongous thank you to all the people who already followed, favorited, and reviewed this story! You guys inspire me so much! \*\*\*\*><strong>

\*\*Sorry again for the mix up with the last two chapters. I hope it

didn't mess you guys up too much.\*\*

\*\*And for final clarification, Toothless did not bite off Hiccup's leg in this story. He bit down hard enough, anchored with teeth, to mangle the leg beyond repair. It would be better for Hiccup to have a usable prosthetic than an unusable leg. \*\*

\*\*Once again, thank you for all the reviews, praise and criticism alike! Your favorites, follows, and views are equally appreciated! Love you guys!\*\*

End  
file.